

The background of the book cover is a photograph of a natural rock archway. The arch is formed by dark, layered rock with some lighter, brownish-orange mineral deposits. Through the arch, a view of a beach and the ocean is visible. The beach is sandy and covered with some seaweed. The ocean has small, white-capped waves. The sky is a pale, overcast blue.

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND

# Objectivity

AN INTRODUCTION TO  
ABSOLUTE IDEALISM

SEBASTIAN  
RÖDL

## SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND OBJECTIVITY



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# Self-Consciousness and Objectivity

*An Introduction to Absolute Idealism*

SEBASTIAN RÖDL

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## SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND OBJECTIVITY





## Chapter One

# Objectivity versus the First Person

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### 1.1. Objectivity, the first person

Thinking that such-and-such is the case is an act of a subject. Yet thought is objective: whether someone is right to think what she does depends, depends alone, on what she thinks; it is independent of any character of her who thinks it. If we call what the subject thinks the object of her thought, we can say: thought is objective, as its validity depends on its object alone and is independent of its subject.

Thought is objective: whether it is right to think something depends on what is thought alone, not on any character of the subject thinking it. This seems to imply that thought is objective insofar as its subject does not figure in its object. More precisely: insofar as it does not there figure *as its subject*. Someone may think of herself; she who thinks may figure in what she thinks. But insofar as her thought is objective, she does not figure in what she thinks *as thinking it*. Thought, being objective, is of something other than itself.

There is thought that is of the subject thinking it and is of her as thinking it: thought whose expression in language requires the use of a first-person pronoun. When someone thinks in the manner expressed by a first-person pronoun, then she who thinks is she of whom she

thinks, not per accidens, but in virtue of the manner in which she thinks of her. As the identity of her who thinks with her of whom she thinks defines the manner of thinking, it is apprehended not in a separate act, in which the subject recognizes someone of whom she thinks to be herself. Rather, the identity is comprehended in the first-person thought itself. Hence, thinking what one thinks in a first-person thought is thinking oneself thinking it. What is thought first-personally contains its being thought.

Thought is objective: its validity depends alone on what it thinks and on no character of the subject thinking it. This appears to mean that thought is of something other than the act of thinking it. Now, what is thought in the first person contains the act of thinking it. It follows that, insofar as thought is objective, it is not internal to what is thought that it be thought in the first person. For then it would be internal to what is thought that it be thought. As we seek objective validity, we flee the first person; we achieve objectivity as we expel the first person from our thought. For example, I may think that I am a human being. Insofar as my thought is objective, what I think is this: there is a certain individual, and he is a human being. Thinking this in the first person, I understand that he who I think is a human being thinks that he is; I understand this as I think of him in the special way in which I do so. Yet, insofar as my thought is objective, what I think, thinking that he is a human being, does not include his thinking that he is a human being. Objective thought, ultimately, is not first-personal.

It is widely taken for granted that the objectivity of thought resides in this: that it is of something that is and is as it is independently of being thought to be and being thought to be so. For example, this idea orients the literature, emanating from the writings of P. F. Strawson, which reflects on how sensory experience may constitute objective knowledge, how it can yield, as it is put, knowledge of *an objective world*. We conceive sense perception to deliver objective knowledge as we comprehend it to derive from an object that owes neither its existence nor its nature to our experience of it. Introducing the topic of his essay “Things Without the Mind”, Gareth Evans writes:

What is the connection between the idea of an objective world and the idea of a spatial world? If someone has a conception of

a world, *something whose existence and operations are independent of his experience of it* [my emphasis], must he thereby conceive of a system of spatial relations in which both he and the phenomena he experiences have a place? . . . The connection between space and objectivity lies so deep in our conceptual scheme. (“Things Without the Mind”, p. 249)

The clause enclosed in commas, which I put in italics, explains what Evans means when he speaks of a world, or, in the preceding sentence, an objective world. A world, an objective world, the object of thought insofar as thought is objective, is something that is and is as it is independently of being apprehended by her who apprehends it: this is the starting point of Evans’s inquiry into the role of space in experience.

The idea that the first-person character of a thought stands opposed to its objectivity is equally widespread. Compare, for example, the opening paragraph of Thomas Nagel’s *The Last Word*:

This discussion will be concerned with . . . the issue of where understanding and justification come to an end. Do they come to an end with objective principles whose validity is independent of our point of view, or do they end within our point of view—individual or shared—so that, ultimately, even the apparently most objective and universal principles derive their validity or authority from the perspective and practice of those who follow them? . . . The issue, in a nutshell, is whether the first person, singular or plural, is hiding at the bottom of everything we say or think. (*The Last Word*, p. 3)

Justification comes to an end in thought that we recognize to be valid. That validity either is limited to our “point of view”, in which case it depends on our thinking it: on our being disposed, or willing, or used to thinking it; and its expression essentially involves the first-person pronoun, singular or plural. Or the validity of our thought depends only on what we think and in no way on us who think it. In that case we shed the first person in thought that satisfies our desire for objective validity; thought in which our striving for objectivity comes to rest knows nothing of us who think it.

## 1.2. Self-consciousness; terminological remarks

Thought, we said, is objective: its validity depends on what it thinks alone and on no character of the subject thinking it. There is a further feature of the validity of thought, or judgment. In judging that things are so, I think it correct so to judge. I do not, in one act of the mind, judge that things are so and, in a second act, think my judgment valid. Rather, judging that things are so *is* taking it to be right to judge that they are. Judgment returns to itself.

Thinking that something is so is being conscious of the validity of thinking this. We may put this by saying that a judgment is self-consciously valid, indicating that a judgment *is* a consciousness of *itself* as valid. The validity of judgment, then, not only is objective; it is also self-conscious.

This is the place for a few terminological notes, which will explain certain ways of speaking that, while they facilitate the exposition, are perhaps unfamiliar and therefore liable to give rise to misunderstanding. I use “judgment” and “thought” interchangeably, following ordinary usage: “He thinks that things are so” represents him as judging, as holding true, that things are so. And I use “consciousness” to designate a genus of which thought, judgment, knowledge are species. Other species are animal perception and desire. Hence, “judging that things are so is being conscious of the validity of so judging” is a variant of “judging is taking it to be correct so to judge”. Neither formula implies that the judgment that is taken to be correct *is* correct. Someone’s judgment may be invalid. If it is, then so is her thought of it as valid. This is how it must be, as her judgment and her thought of it as valid are but one act of the mind.

Judging is being conscious of the validity of so judging. I also express this by saying that a judgment is conscious of its own validity. This is not a metaphor that depicts a judgment as though it were a subject of thought. It is a manner of speaking that avoids cumbersome locutions. It means nothing less and nothing more than that a judgment and the thought of its validity are one act of the mind and a single consciousness.<sup>1</sup> I shall freely use sentences that cast judgment in the role of the grammatical subject of verbs of consciousness. This is invariably to be

understood as signifying the internality of the relevant consciousness to the act of judgment in question. Someone who is bothered by this manner of speaking should translate the locution in accordance with the present explanation.

Instead of “the validity of thought is objective and self-conscious”, I also say, “judgment is self-consciously and objectively valid”. The latter locution is not meant to convey—absurdly—that judgment as such is valid. It describes the form of validity that belongs to judgment. It says: such is the validity of judgment—of valid judgment, it goes without saying. The validity of judgment is self-conscious: a valid judgment is thought to be valid *in* this very judgment. And its validity is objective: the measure of its validity does not involve the subject of the judgment. I also say, thought is objective, as short for saying that its validity is; in Chapter 6, we shall find that the objectivity of the validity of thought entails an objectivity of the act of thinking. For now we understand talk of the objectivity of thought to speak of its validity.

A last note, on “validity”. The validity, or correctness, or rightness, that I mean is the conformity of a judgment to its inner measure of perfection: a valid judgment is as it is to be, simply as judgment.<sup>2</sup> It is an *inner* measure as a judgment is governed by it in virtue of being what it is, judgment. We will be concerned throughout this essay with the question what judgment is, and thus with how it is to be, simply as judgment. However, we can begin from a specification of its perfection that is familiar: a judgment that is as it is to be, simply as judgment, is true. It is correct to judge that things are so only if so to judge is to judge truly, that is, only if things are as one judges them to be. For now, this will be our idea of the validity of judgment.

### 1.3. Self-consciousness and the first person

Judgment is self-consciously valid. The term “self-consciousness” calls to mind the first-person pronoun. And rightly so. We noted that what is thought in the first person contains the act of thinking it. The converse holds as well: what contains the act of thinking it is thought, in this act, in the first person.

Let it be that someone is so in such a manner that her being so contains her thinking herself to be so. (The term “be” here signifies predication in general. “Siggi is walking to the bakery” is a case of someone’s being so.) This thought of hers is a first-person thought. For suppose it were not: suppose she thought herself to be so in a manner that left it open whether she, who thought this, was the one of whom she thought; suppose, that is, she thought herself to be so, but not in the first person. Then—this is what we stipulated—she does not, *in* thinking what she thinks, comprehend her of whom she thinks to think it; what she thinks, thinking a certain subject to be so, does not contain that subject’s thinking herself to be so. It follows that what she thinks is not that she is so; for—this was the supposition with which we began the paragraph—*that* does include the subject’s thinking it. What contains a thought of itself contains a first-person thought.

In thinking that things are so I think it valid to think this, we said; an act of thought thinks its own validity. Hence thought, as such, is the thought of itself; thought is self-conscious. Being self-conscious, thought is thought in the first person: *I think*.

As thinking that things are so is thinking it valid to think this, the *I think* is thought in every act of thinking: an act of thinking is the first-person thought of itself. As being conscious of thinking that things are so is not a different act from thinking this, the act of the mind expressed by *So it is* is the same as the one expressed by *I think it is so*. As the act of thinking is one, so is what it thinks; as the *I think* is thought in every act of thinking, the *I think* is contained in everything thought. This cannot be put by saying that, in every act of thinking, two things are thought: *p* and *I think p*. On the contrary. Since thinking *p* is thinking oneself to think it, there is no such thing as thinking, in addition to thinking *p*, that one thinks this. If our notation confuses us, suggesting as it does that *I think* is added to a *p* that is free from it, we may devise one that makes *I think* internal to *p*: we may form the letter *p* by writing, in the shape of a *p*, the words *I think*.

This bears repeating: there is no meaning in saying that, in an act of thinking, two things are thought, *p* and *I think p*. Kant said: the *I think* accompanies all my thoughts.<sup>3</sup> Hegel calls this way of putting it “inept”.<sup>4</sup> However, in defense of Kant, we note that he hastened to add that the

*I think* cannot in turn be accompanied by any representation. Thus he sought to make it plain that the *I think* is not something thought alongside the thought that it accompanies, but internal to what is thought as such.

When I say, the *I think* is contained in what is thought, this may with equal justice be called inept. It suggests that there are two things, one containing the other. Perhaps we should say, what is thought is suffused with the *I think*. But here, too, if we undertake to think through the metaphor, we come to grief before long. People have tried saying that the *I think* is in the background, while what is thought is in the foreground, or that what is thought is thematic, while the *I think* is unthematic. These metaphors are apt to solidify the notion that there are two things represented, the object and my thinking of it: in a visual scene, what is in the foreground and what is in the background are distinct things seen (the house in the foreground, say, the trees in the background); in a piece of music, the theme is heard alongside its accompaniment. But we must not take issue with these figurative ways of speaking; it is not through metaphors and images that we understand self-consciousness.<sup>5</sup> We will continue to talk of containment, not to provide illumination, but to have a convenient way of speaking.

A more ambitious idea is that the *I think* is the form of what is thought. This may be right. Yet we cannot hope to understand thought through a concept of form that is taken from elsewhere, the bronze statue, say, or the animal.<sup>6</sup> What we can say is this: if the *I think* is the form of what is thought, then the form of what is thought is thought in everything that is thought. Thinking something is thinking it through its form, the form that it bears as something thought. That is right. We shall come to it in Chapter 4.

Thought is objective. And it is self-conscious. This is confounding. It seemed that, as thought is objective, what is thought must be distinct from the act of thinking it. It cannot be internal to what is thought that it be thought. Insofar as thought is objective, the first person is outside it. But if thought is self-conscious, then what is thought, as such, contains the act of thinking it. The *I think* is inside what is thought not in special cases, first-person thoughts. It is inside what is thought insofar as it is something thought. We seem to have to conclude that thought is



either objective or self-conscious. It cannot be both; self-consciousness rules out objectivity, and objectivity rules out self-consciousness.

We may put this in Nagel's terms. On the one hand, if thought is objective, then achieving validity in thought requires that we break free from the first person. If thought is objective, then the first person cannot be the last word. On the other hand, if thought is self-conscious, then the first person is in every thought. There is no expelling the first person from thought, for thought, as such, is the first-person thought of itself. The first person is the original word of thought; it is its first and its last word.

#### 1.4. The unity of objectivity and self-consciousness, as it emerges in the writings cited

It seems we must err in thinking that thought is both: self-conscious and objective. Perhaps thought is objective, but not self-conscious; or self-conscious, but not objective. As we contemplate this choice, we are struck by the observation that, precisely in the texts to which we referred above, the objectivity of thought appears to be nothing other than its self-consciousness.

In *The Last Word*, Nagel asserts that "we can't understand thought from the outside" (cf. the title of the second chapter of this work). It is the objectivity of thought that imposes a limit on the possibility of comprehending it "from the outside":

I would explain the point of Descartes's cogito this way. It reveals a limit to the kind of self-criticism that begins when one looks at oneself from the outside and considers the ways in which one's convictions might have been produced by causes which fail to justify and validate them. (*The Last Word*, p. 19)

Nagel contrasts apprehending thought from the outside with a different manner of apprehending it. This different way of apprehending oneself thinking a thought is from the inside, from inside thinking the

thought: thinking a thought is apprehending oneself thinking it. Apprehending oneself thinking a thought in this way, from the inside, is, Nagel suggests, thinking one's thought to be valid and just.<sup>7</sup> thinking that things are so is taking it to be valid, or just, to think that they are. We apprehend a thought to be valid as we "simply have it" (I suppose we can say: think it): "There are some types of thought we cannot avoid simply having—that it is strictly impossible to consider merely from the outside" (*The Last Word*, p. 20). We apprehend a thought as valid as we think it "straight": "Certain forms of thought inevitably occur straight in the consideration of such hypotheses—revealing themselves to be objective in content" (pp. 23–24). The objectivity of thought, then, appears to reside in this, that thought contains a conception of itself as valid. The objectivity of thought resides in its self-consciousness.

We see something similar in the Strawsonian literature on experience and its objectivity. This literature brings out that, in order for someone to comprehend her experience as being of something that is as it is independently of her experience of it, she must be conscious, *in her experience*, of various aspects of her experience—for example, its dependence on the spatial position of her, the subject of the experience, relative to the object she experiences.<sup>8</sup> One page after the passage we quoted above, Evans writes:

He [Strawson] argues that the concept of an objective world, crucially the idea of existence unperceived, would not have any application *in* the experience of such a being unless that experience provides him with at least some analogue of space. ("Things Without the Mind", p. 250, my emphasis)

Evans speaks of concepts that have application, not only *to* what someone experiences, but *in* her experience: she herself, the subject of the experience, applies these concepts *in experiencing what she does*. Crucially, she applies the concept of existence unperceived; and as Evans explains, this is the same as the concept of existence perceived. So in order for perception to be objective, the concept of perception must be applied in perception. A few pages later, Evans develops this in the

following way: the concept of perception constitutes a theory of perception; it is an understanding, however inarticulate, of what perception is:

... some rudimentary theory, or form of a theory of perception is required. This is the indispensable surrounding for the idea of existence unperceived, and so, of existence perceived. (op. cit., pp. 261–262)<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps it is infelicitous to call the understanding of perception that is at work in perception a theory. Surely it is not an empirical theory. In any case, Evans asserts that objective experience, as such, understands itself to be what it is: objective experience. This is not something Evans seeks to establish in the text from which the quote is taken. This essay inquires whether objective experience as such is a consciousness of space. It is in specifying what it is of which he seeks to know whether it is necessarily a consciousness of space that Evans says what he does. What he lays down as defining the object of his inquiry is this: objective experience is experience that contains an understanding of itself. The objectivity of experience lies in its self-consciousness.<sup>10</sup>

The texts we adduced above to document the tendency to think that the objectivity of thought requires that it be of something other than itself, that we achieve objectivity as we shed the first person—these very texts suggest that the objectivity of thought is nothing other than its self-consciousness. If this is right, then there is no holding to the objectivity of thought by rejecting its self-consciousness, and no holding to its self-consciousness by rejecting its objectivity.

### 1.5. The identity of objectivity and self-consciousness

As thought is objective, what is thought is other than the act of thinking it. As thought is self-conscious, what is thought contains the act of thinking it. In this way, self-consciousness and objectivity appear to exclude one another. Yet it also seems that the objectivity of thought resides in its self-consciousness. If this is right, then the opposition of

objectivity to self-consciousness, or the first person, must be merely apparent. And so it is: the objectivity of thought is nothing other than its self-consciousness, and its self-consciousness is nothing other than its objectivity.

Before we can bring out the identity of objectivity and self-consciousness, we must render explicit an implication of the way in which we introduced the idea of objectivity. The validity of a judgment is objective, we said, as it depends on no character of the subject judging it, but rather on what she judges alone. The phrase “but rather” signifies that the terms it joins exclude one another: what the subject judges, on the one hand, and the character of her who judges it, on the other. Hence we must understand “character of the subject”, in the context of this definition of the objectivity of thought, to be limited to determinations of the subject that are not contained in what she judges. In order to indicate this limitation, I shall speak of a *given* character of the subject: a given character of the judging subject is such that, in order to understand her to possess it, it does not suffice to share in her judgment and judge what she judges. In order to apprehend a given character of the subject of a judgment, one must go beyond the object of her judgment. This makes it a given character. (I say below why it is proper to call such a character of the subject “given”).<sup>11</sup>

Now we can say straightaway that objectivity and self-consciousness are the same. The self-consciousness of judgment entails its objectivity: as judging that things are so is thinking it valid to judge that they are, the validity of a judgment can depend on nothing that one does not apprehend *in* this very judgment. It can depend on no *given* character of the subject: no character of her that one does not understand her to possess in judging what she herself judges. Conversely, the objectivity of judgment entails its self-consciousness: as the validity of a judgment depends alone on what it judges, there can be nothing of which one need be conscious in addition to what one judges in order to recognize judging it to be valid; being conscious of what is judged suffices for being conscious of the validity of judging it. Since any given character of the subject of judgment is excluded from the measure of validity of her judgment, nothing over and above the thought of what is judged—and that is, nothing over and above the judgment itself—is required for the

thought of the validity of judging it. A judgment, being objective, is itself the thought of its validity.

Or we may put it in this way. Suppose someone judges that such-and-such is the case. Her judgment is valid if and only if it is the case. Indeed, her judgment is valid, if it is, in virtue of its being the case. In this resides the objectivity of her judgment. And it entails that, in order to ascertain whether she is right to judge as she does, I attend to no given character of her who so judges, but to the object of her judgment alone. If I recognize that such-and-such is the case, then I know, know therein, everything I need to know in order to recognize her judgment to be valid. Judging that which she judges, I think it right to judge as she does. Judging the validity of her judgment, I repeat her judgment. What is true of me is true of her: in judging what she judges, she thinks it right so to judge. As judgment is objective, it is the thought of its own validity.

### 1.6. Aim and outline

The objectivity of thought *is* its self-consciousness. It cannot be true, then, that the objectivity of thought requires that what is thought be distinct from the act of thinking it. It must be an error to suppose that thought, in order to be objective, must be of something other than itself. As the objectivity of thought is its self-consciousness, thought, precisely as it is objective, thinks nothing but itself. This essay will unfold that idea.

As judgment is self-conscious, it contains an idea of what it is: judgment. Every judgment, as such, is the thought of itself as judgment. The idea of judgment that the present essay undertakes to expound is nothing other than the idea of judgment that is contained in every judgment. Hence, this essay not only *is about* the self-consciousness of judgment; it *is*—the expression in language of—the self-consciousness of judgment. It is what it is about. Obviously. For, what it is, and is about, is self-consciousness. We discuss this character of our inquiry in Chapter 3.

This explains what may appear a curious character of the present essay: it propounds no theses, advances no hypotheses, does not

recommend a view or position; it does not give arguments that are to support a view, it does not defend a position against competing ones, it does nothing to rule out contrary theses. It does nothing of the sort because it is—it brings to explicit consciousness—the self-consciousness of judgment. As it aims to express the comprehension of judgment that is contained in any judgment, the present essay can say only what anyone always already knows, knows in any judgment, knows insofar as she judges at all. It cannot say anything that is novel, it can make no discovery, it cannot advance our knowledge in the least. Echoing Kant, we can say that its work is not that universal knowledge, but a formula of it.<sup>12</sup> Its work is its language. Again echoing Kant, we can say that this is no mean thing. In the formula we think clearly what we know; the formula shields us from confusion, which, being a confusion with respect to the knowledge in which and through which we are subjects of judgment, must do the most pervasive damage.

While the knowledge that this essay seeks is universal—it is the original possession of anyone who judges at all—its exposition will not be so received by everyone. It is most difficult to achieve clarity with respect to that which is the first and last thing we know. Formidable obstacles stand in the way of clarity. A subsidiary work of this essay therefore is the removal of such obstacles.

As judgment is self-conscious, there are not two things judged: *p* and *I judge p*. The *I judge* is inside what is judged insofar as it is something judged. Or perhaps we should say, the *I judge* pervades what is judged, indicating that there is no possibility of isolating, within what is judged, something that is free from the thought of its being judged. Conversely, as the thought of an act of judgment is nothing other than that judgment, there is no possibility of isolating the act of judgment from what is judged in this act: the thought of a judgment is nothing other than the thought of what is judged in this judgment. In consequence, then, and in general, comprehending what it is to judge is nothing other than comprehending what it is that is judged. The most insidious obstacle to appreciating this character of judgment—its self-consciousness—is the idea that our conception of judgment must distinguish what is judged from the act of judging it. In Frege's terms, it is

the idea that judgment is the attachment of a force to a content, the content being a thought, and the force the ascription to it of the value *true*. In a terminology that held sway in past decades, judgment is a propositional attitude, the attitude being an act of affirmation, and the proposition what is affirmed.

Judgment is self-conscious, and this is to say: the act of judgment is inside what is judged. The notion that judgment is articulated into force and content denies the self-consciousness of judgment. Nothing pertaining to judgment is so much as available to reflection as long as the force-content distinction is in place; the notion that judgment is a propositional attitude is the source of the most thoroughgoing confusion everywhere. The first thing necessary in order to begin thinking about judgment and its validity is to recognize the impossibility of conceiving judgment in this way. This will be our first step, in Chapter 2.

Having considered and rejected, in Chapter 3, the attempt to retain the force-content distinction by denying that judgment is self-conscious, we begin, in Chapter 4, to spell out the idea of judgment: the object of judgment, the power of judgment, the concept of judgment. What we find is this: the object of judgment is not this or that object; it is *the* object, the object *überhaupt*. The power of judgment is not a power to this or that; it is *the* power, the power *überhaupt*. The concept of judgment is not a concept of this or that; it is *the* concept, the concept *überhaupt*. This is a consequence of the objectivity of judgment. It follows that the science of judgment—the systematic knowledge that constitutes understanding of what judgment is—is not this or that science; it is *the* science, the science *überhaupt*. It is philosophy.

In judging, I think it valid so to judge. In the first instance, the validity of a judgment—its being as it is to be, simply as judgment—is its truth, that is, its agreement with what is. Thinking it valid to judge as I do, I think my judgment true; I think that things are as I judge them to be. As I think my judgment valid *in* judging, I take my judgment to be, not only true, but non-accidentally so. I take my judgment to be knowledge. In the fundamental case, I think myself to know things to be as I judge them to be. This thought is nothing other than my judgment.

As the concept of knowledge is contained in the self-consciousness of judgment, there can be no account of knowledge that does not represent the subject who knows as understanding herself to do so. An account of knowledge seeks to bring to explicit consciousness the self-knowledge of her who knows; it articulates what is contained in her knowing herself to know. If we are to express in language the self-consciousness of judgment, we need to articulate the idea of a judgment in which and through which she who judges comprehends that judgment to be knowledge, comprehends it to be true to, agree with, reality. This task is rarely confronted in epistemology today.<sup>13</sup> Thomas Nagel and Adrian Moore confront it. We will discuss their thoughts in Chapter 5. While both are oriented by the understanding we have of judgment *in* judging, they fail to appreciate the significance of this; they fail to appreciate the significance of the self-consciousness of judgment. They hold fast to the notion that the objectivity of judgment resides in its being of something other, something that is as it is independently of being thought to be so. In consequence, their result is an ultimate incomprehensibility of our thought of ourselves as judging and knowing.

Thought, precisely because it is objective, thinks nothing but itself. We need to understand how judgment can be knowledge of what is in such a way that, precisely as knowledge of what is, it is nothing other than self-knowledge of knowledge, or knowledge knowing itself. This is a formula of absolute idealism. It echoes Hegel's formula: reason is the certainty of consciousness of being all reality.<sup>14</sup> This is why the present book can be read as an introduction to absolute idealism.

There is a major obstacle to the reception of absolute idealism, the history of it and, more importantly, the thought of it: this is the notion that absolute idealism is a species of—idealism. In an appropriately vague and vulgar way, idealism can be represented as the idea that the world, nature, the object of experience, depends on the mind. Reality is mind-dependent. Absolute idealism is the most radical, the most thorough, and the only sound rejection of that.

It is obvious that we possess empirical knowledge: knowledge of something that is as it is independently of being known to be so. However, if knowledge is of nothing but itself, then—so it seems we must say—there is no such thing as empirical knowledge. And if it be



claimed, against reason, that knowledge, always and as such, is self-knowledge, then that of which we are used to thinking as knowledge of an independent world will turn out to be knowledge merely of the mind. The aim of this essay, as an introduction to absolute idealism, is to make plain that it is impossible to think judgment through this opposition: mind here, world there, two things in relation or not. To dismantle this opposition is not to propose that the world is mind-dependent. Nor is it to propose that the mind is world-dependent. These ways of speaking solidify the opposition; they are an impediment to comprehension.

I said it was obvious that we possess empirical knowledge. How is that obvious? Does natural science show us that we have empirical knowledge? Has science given us, through its success, so many proofs of its agreement with reality? It is obvious that we have empirical knowledge, for it is known *in self-consciousness*. The difficulty is to understand how that can be. How can it be that my knowing how things are independently of my knowing them to be so is known by me, not in a separate act of the mind, but *in* knowing how things are independently of my knowing them to be so? *Empirical* knowledge is of what is independently of being known to be. Yet it is *knowledge* only because it is self-knowledge, knowledge knowing itself. In the last chapter we will be able to say this with comprehension, understanding at last how it is that thought is objective in being self-conscious, and self-conscious in being objective.

Having taken in Nagel and Moore, we set out to do what they sought to do: articulate the conception of judgment that is inside judgment, specifically the recognition of its validity. We seek a conception of judgment that reveals it to be what it is to be: comprehension of itself as knowledge of what is.

We begin with the thought, internal to judgment, of what explains the act of judgment. What explains a judgment is something that, as explaining it, reveals the judgment it explains to be valid. The explanation of a judgment is its justification (Chapter 6). However, ultimately, justification cannot provide for the recognition of the validity of the judgment it justifies; it cannot bring inside what we know in the judgment the agreement of this very judgment with reality.

The possibility of justification depends on our comprehension of a general source of judgment: in judging, I understand my judgment to spring from a power, which, in its ultimate description, is the power of knowledge. Indeed, I so comprehend anyone's judgment. The idea of the power of knowledge as the source of judgment underlies any thought of any judgment anywhere. The concept of judgment is nothing other than this power (Chapter 7).

The recent reintroduction of the idea of the power of knowledge into epistemology is a huge step.<sup>15</sup> Yet the idea is confounding. It is confounding on account of the objectivity of judgment. Since judgment is objective, the power of knowledge is not a power to this or that; it is *the* power, the power *überhaupt*. And this makes it hard to understand how it can provide for the recognition of the validity of a particular judgment. We make progress as we see that the power of knowledge is not a *given* power. It is not a power that is as it is anyway, independently of being understood in acts of this very power. (As Aristotle notes, this distinguishes the power of knowledge from powers of sensory consciousness.) As the power of knowledge is nothing given, it is what it is only in its own exercise: it determines itself. The power of knowledge is what is known; it is what we know, or *the knowledge* (Chapter 8).

This may appear merely to move the question to a different place. How can what is known provide for its own comprehension as known? However, in the very structure of knowledge revealed in Chapter 8—knowledge grounded in what is known—we find knowledge: knowledge of the principles of judgment as such. These principles are not specific judgments, to be laid alongside other judgments. They are known in any judgment, in the thought of itself as valid that any judgment is. They are the science of judgment. In these principles, thought and being are known to be the same. Knowledge of these principles is original, or absolute, knowledge (Chapter 9).

Yet absolute knowledge is nothing at all unless it is knowledge of that which is known empirically and by means of the senses. Indeed, absolute knowledge must itself provide for its comprehension as knowledge of what is known empirically: in knowing what we know originally, or absolutely, we must comprehend ourselves to know the very reality that

is the object of empirical knowledge. As we recognize this, we see that and how absolute knowledge is nothing other than empirical knowledge and empirical knowledge nothing other than absolute knowledge (Chapter 10). Thus we understand how it can be that thought, being objective, is self-conscious, and objective, being self-conscious.

## *Chapter Two*

# Propositions

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### 2.1. Force and content

As thought is objective, its validity depends on what is thought alone and on no given character of her who thinks it. This seems to imply that what is thought is other than its being thought. Then thought bears this articulation: there is what is thought and there is the thinking of it. Judgment is a propositional attitude: there is the proposition, the object that one thinks, and there is an attitude one adopts toward this object, assenting to it. In Frege's terminology, the act of assent is the force, that to which one assents, the content. (I use the term "proposition" to refer to an alleged object of thought to which assent is external. I do not believe this is a common use of the term historically.<sup>1</sup> But history does not concern us.)

The distinction of force and content is to underwrite the objectivity of thought, and therewith its universality, by locating objectivity and universality in the content, as opposed to the act, of judgment. In the first instance, a proposition is valid; the validity of the act follows: it is right to affirm a proposition if and only if the proposition is true. This explains the objectivity of judgment: it ensures that the validity of the attitude depends on no given character of the subject adopting it, but

on the object of her attitude alone. And it explains the universality of judgment: there can be no difference in the validity of acts of distinct subjects provided they relate to the same proposition.

If judgment is articulated into force and content, then *I think p* is a content alongside and different from *p*. It is one thing to think something, it is another to think that one thinks it. That things are so is one object of judgment, inquiry, understanding; one's act of judging that they are so is another object of judgment, inquiry, understanding. One's judging that such-and-such is the case is one bit of reality alongside other bits, among them the bit that consists in such-and-such's being the case.

This denies the self-consciousness of thought. Suppose John thinks what he would express by saying *I think p*. There are two elements: a proposition, *I think p*, and John's attitude toward it: John affirms *I think p*. As the proposition is distinct from the act of affirming it, its truth value does not depend on anyone's affirming it; a fortiori, it does not depend on John's affirming it. As he affirms the proposition, John is onto a bit of reality, which is as it is independently of anyone's apprehension of it. John apprehends this reality; perhaps he cannot fail to apprehend it given how it involves him, John. Yet, the reality is one thing, John's apprehending it, another. However, as thinking something is understanding oneself to think it, John thinks *p* if and only if he thinks that he himself thinks *p*. "He himself", here, is the first-person pronoun in oratio obliqua: John thinks *p* if and only if he thinks what he would express by saying "I think *p*". The truth of the proposition John affirms, affirming *I think p*, depends on, indeed, depends on nothing but, his affirming it. Which is to say that there is no such proposition.

Thinking that one thinks *p* is not affirming a proposition *I think p*. For, thinking that one thinks *p* is nothing other than thinking *p*. This may seem a limited failure of the force-content distinction. *I think p* cannot be a proposition because judgment is self-conscious. But this character of the act of judgment does not affect its object; *that* is a proposition all right. The force-content distinction is fine; it is just that we must not apply it to first-person thought of thought. There it breaks down on account of the peculiar character of thinking—its self-

consciousness. But this character of thinking leaves untouched the nature of what is thought.

We are led to think this as we consider the identity of thinking something and thinking oneself thinking it in a certain way, which we may indicate by brackets. We compare *[I think] p* to *[I think I think] p* and recognize the identity of what is inside the brackets: an act of thought, and the thought of this act. However, we can put the brackets in a different place and compare *I think [p]* to *I think [I think p]*. Again we recognize the identity of what is inside the brackets: what is thought, and the thought of it. The different positions of the brackets do not indicate a difference in reality. That judging is self-conscious, and that what is judged contains its being judged—that is but one thought. There is no step from the first to the second.

There are ways to occlude this. There is our affirming *p*, and there is *p*, we want to say. These are different things. Thus we hold fast to the *objectivity of the content* of judgment. Further, in affirming *p*—not in an act of the mind that is separate from and additional to our affirming *p*—we are conscious of affirming *p*. Thus we acknowledge the *self-consciousness of the act* of judgment. Now we do not want to say simply that, affirming *p*, we are conscious of two things: *p* and *I think p*. If we said this, it would be obvious that we fail to register the self-consciousness of thought. For, distinguishing the two things we allegedly think in thinking *p*, namely, *p* and *I think p*, we in effect distinguish thinking *p* from thinking *I think p*. While at the same time we claim to acknowledge that thinking *p* is nothing other than thinking oneself to think that. As we do not want to be so crude, we say that, while, affirming *p*, we are conscious of two things, of what we affirm and of our affirming it, we are not conscious of them in the same way. We are conscious of our affirmation non-positionally, of what we affirm, positionally; what we affirm is in the foreground, our affirmation of it in the background, the objective fact is in the center of attention; our subjective access to this fact in the periphery. However, as we distinguish these ways of being conscious of something, we have fixed it that there are two acts of consciousness, each with its own object. Thus we have lost the insight that judgment is self-conscious. We can go on, working ourselves into a still deeper morass, and declare that these two consciousnesses are

inseparably bound one to the other, by metaphysical necessity, as we might venture saying. But now we must ask how we know of this metaphysical necessity, and whether our knowledge of it is a separate act of the mind from the judgment in question, and how, if it is not, it can be that we think of this judgment in the first person: *I judge p*. Let us leave it here.

As judgment is self-conscious, there are not two things thought, *p* and *I think p*; the *I think* is thought *in* any thought; it is inside what is thought as such. Thinking an act of judgment—in the fundamental case, anyway—is not thinking anything other than what is judged in this judgment. And conversely. Hence, conceiving judgment as a propositional attitude is denying its self-consciousness. Discussions of the force-content distinction do not make this explicit. The distinction is introduced as a matter of course; the student is trained not to be tricked by the act-object ambiguity. But there is an awareness that the force-content distinction and the doctrine of propositions have difficulty accommodating first-person thought: *I\_\_*. The first person is a thorn in the flesh of the friends of propositions. It is taken to be a local problem, a problem of subsuming a special kind of thought under the obviously sound conception of thought. However, the wound torn by the first person cannot heal because the first-person pronoun signifies self-consciousness: the internality to what is thought of its being thought. Therefore it is *never* possible to isolate, within what is thought in the first person, something that is as it is anyway from its being thought.

I first discuss why there can be no Fregean account of first-person thought, no account that provides it with a Fregean thought as its object. Then I turn to a conception of proposition that may appear to register the self-consciousness of thought, since, formally, it represents (or can easily be made to represent) all thought as first-person thought. A proposition of the sort in question is not true or false simpliciter, but at a context in which it is thought, which crucially includes the one who thinks the thought. The origin of this idea is in writings of Kaplan and Lewis, which widely inform present-day philosophy of language. We will see that it yields no account of first-person thought; it never reaches what someone thinks who makes an assertion, taking her assertion to be valid.

## 2.2. Fregean propositions

As we apply the distinction of force and content to first-person thought, we frame the idea of a proposition that, while distinct from the attitude that the subject adopts toward it, is of the subject *as the one who adopts the attitude toward it*. The first-person pronoun, we think, is a variety of reference, a form of expression that singles out a certain object from a manifold of objects. Its contribution to the proposition is the special way in which the object is singled out, and the italicized phrase describes that way: the object is singled out *as the subject who is affirming the proposition*.

The given description of a first-person proposition—it is of the subject who adopts an attitude toward it, and is of her *as this subject*—entails that for each such proposition, there is only one subject who can harbor attitudes toward it; only one subject can give it force. It is a proposition of, say, Dr. Lauben, and is of him as the one who adopts an attitude toward this very proposition. No one but Dr. Lauben can adopt attitudes toward a proposition that is of Dr. Lauben in this way.<sup>2</sup> Here there is no such thing as different subjects affirming the same content; the content is reserved for the subject affirming it. It is a private content. This is strange. Whether it is right to assent to a proposition depends on the truth value of that proposition alone. Thus a proposition is a law that governs attitudes toward it. A private proposition is a private law. It is a law for one subject only; it binds her alone and speaks to no one else. Or we can put it in this way. A proposition signifies a way for things to be; if the proposition is true, then things are this way. If there are true first-person propositions, then there are ways in which things are that can be thought by one subject alone. They are private facts, constituting a private world, objective all right, yet precluding everyone from apprehending them except one single distinguished subject.

The Fregean retorts that the objectivity of thought, in the first place, resides in this: its validity depends on what it thinks alone, not on the subject's thinking it. A private content—thinkable only by her to which it pertains—provides for objectivity in this sense: the validity of affirming it depends on the truth of the proposition affirmed; it does



not depend on any character of the subject affirming it. It is true that private propositions lack a feature that usually attends objectivity: there is no such thing as a subject other than the one figuring in it affirming such a proposition. First-person propositions lack this feature not because they are not objective, but on account of the special way in which they single out the object, a way in which only she who is this object can single it out. Therefore we are free to imagine an Ersatz for what it lacks: we may postulate that, while no one but the referent of a first-person thought can affirm its content, someone other can affirm a different content, which is and which she understands to be correlated with the content she cannot affirm: the contents are correlated in such a way that, if one is valid, then, not per accidens, but in virtue of the contents' being what they are, the other is valid, too.<sup>3</sup> So when John thinks something he would express by *I have mud on my face*, he holds true a proposition toward which only he can adopt attitudes. Yet someone else, Bob, say, can think something he would express by saying *John has mud on his face* or *This man has mud on his face* or, to John, *You have mud on your face*. Thinking this, Bob understands that the proposition he holds true is correlated with the proposition John (*this man, you*) holds true, even though the latter proposition (the one John affirms) is beyond his, Bob's, affirmation. This also addresses the second way of representing the strangeness of first-person contents. For we can frame the idea of a fact that obtains when a first-person proposition is true, a fact that can be apprehended by anyone: we think of this fact as what is common among true contents correlated in the manner we described.

How does Bob recognize that a thought that is such that there is no such thing as his thinking it is equivalent to a thought that he does think? How does he so much as frame the idea of such a thought? Fregean accounts of first-person thought—accounts that postulate Fregean senses for such thoughts—deploy signs that are to signify the first-person concept of someone other than her who uses the sign. In effect, such a sign quotes the first-person pronoun: the proposition John thinks, thinking *SELF has mud on face*, is the proposition John thinks, thinking what he would express by saying, “I have mud on my face”. What enables us—what enables Bob—to understand this sign? Indeed, what

enables us to apprehend it as a sign? On the Fregean account, we cannot approach the thought we quote any closer than we do in referring to its sign. There is no such thing as disquoting this quote. And we must not say: yes there is, for she who thinks the first-person thought can disquote. For we apprehend her disquoting only in quotes. And our question is what we can make of these quotes. The Neo-Fregean “I”, or SELF, or ☼, is the undisquotable quote, the uninterpretable sign, the enigma itself.<sup>4</sup>

There is no question that Bob comprehends that what he asserts when he says, to John, “You have mud on your face” is true if and only if what John asserts as he says “I have mud on my face” is true. This does not show that John thinks a first-person proposition that he expresses by “I think *p*” and that Bob understands to be equivalent to the one he, Bob, thinks, expressing what he thinks by “You think *p*”. It shows that there is no such thing as a first-person proposition.

The Fregean account conceives the first-person pronoun as a variety of reference, which singles out an object in a special way, indicated by the phrase, *as the one who is affirming the proposition*. This alleged manner of singling out an object explodes the conception of thought that it brings to first-person thought: a thought that is of her who affirms it *as affirming it* contains the subject’s affirmation of it. It is *not* a proposition. The first-person pronoun is no variety of reference, but an expression of self-consciousness: it signifies the internality to what is thought of its being thought. The Fregean attempts to represent self-consciousness, which dissolves the force-content distinction, as a special content. If we are to understand the first-person pronoun, we must understand self-consciousness. The first step to this is abandoning the force-content distinction.

### 2.3. Self-referential propositions

The ostensible soundness of the force-content distinction has, independently of Neo-Fregean attempts to countenance first-person thought, motivated people to represent the self-consciousness of an act of thought as a character of a proposition: the proposition refers to itself; it is self-referential. For example, the following intention may be said to be

required in order for a subject to be communicating something to someone: "I intend that he believe that  $p$  on account of his recognition that I intend *this*." The term "this", which forms part of the phrase specifying the content of the intention, refers to this very content. The content is self-referential. Or the following may be brought forward as specifying an intention in virtue of satisfying which an action is intentional: "I intend that I do  $A$ , and intend that I do it on account of my intending *this*." Again the term "this" refers to the content of an intention and at the same time is a part of the phrase that specifies that content.

The idea of a self-referential proposition is equivalent to the idea of a first-person Fregean sense. While Neo-Fregeans say little about the content of the alleged proposition [ $\odot$  is  $F$ ], apart from asserting that it is what is thought in a first-person thought, it is clear that [ $\odot$  is  $F$ ] must imply [She who thinks *this*, is  $F$ ], where the term "this" refers to the proposition signified by the phrase that contains it. Conversely, a self-referential proposition is one that cannot be thought in more than one act of thinking. For example, the proposition [I am doing  $A$  on account of my intending *this*] must be taken to identify a specific act of intending it, this proposition. That will be the only act whose object this proposition can be.

"I intend that I do  $A$ , and intend that I do it on account of my intending *this*." The term that is to effect the self-reference of the content—"this"—bears a meaning only if the clause does that specifies the content in question. But this clause contains this very term, "this", and therefore has meaning only if that term does. There is no way into this circle. The situation is no different from this one: "I believe *this*."—"What do you believe?"—"I just told you." My interlocutor inquires after the referent of my "this", and I pretend to have given it by the very sentence of which it is a part: "I believe *this*". My speech is meaningless. No belief has been specified, reported, expressed. The examples above relating to communication and intentional action introduce further material into the clause that specifies the content that is to be the referent of the relevant term. This may obscure, but does not supply, the lack of meaning of the sequence of words that is to give that content. The appeal to self-referential contents is widespread; it has become routine in the treatment of all manner of self-conscious activity. It makes no sense.

## 2.4. Propositions that are true at a context

What is thought in the first person contains its being thought. For it is internal to what is so thought that she who figures in the thought thinks it. Hence, if the objectivity of thought resides in its being of something other than the act of thinking it, then first-person thought, because and insofar as it is first-personal, is not objective; thought is objective to the extent that it is free of the first person.

First-person thought, *insofar as* it is first-personal, is not objective. No one will want to claim that there is *nothing* in first-person thought that can be thought objectively. This is why the Neo-Fregean, having laid it down that a first-person thought cannot be thought by anyone except its subject, hastens to recover something objective in it, which she proposes is a known equivalence of the first-person thought to thoughts that others can think. Within the frame set by the force-content distinction, another tack may suggest itself. Obviously, the alleged equivalence would not only need to be known to her who thinks a first-person thought; it must be known to her *in* thinking the first-person thought. Thus we are led to suppose that it must be possible to isolate, *in* what is thought in the first person, something that is thought objectively and understood to be there for anyone; it must be possible to isolate something objective from the first-personal way in which it is represented. For example—this was our example above—when I think *I am a human being*, there is, in what I think, something that is as it is anyway: a certain substance is a human being. As I think this in the first person, I represent that substance as thinking that she is a human being. That she thinks this is one thing, that she is what she thinks herself to be, another. As we shall see, the semantic framework deriving from Kaplan and Lewis in effect imposes this articulation on first-person thought: she who thinks a first-person thought thinks something of a certain substance, which substance, in a separate thought, she thinks to be herself.

We can introduce the fundamental idea of the semantic framework in question by considering a certain kind of sentence: a sentence that relates itself to features of its use. Someone who uses a present-tense

sentence concerns herself with the time of her very use of it. Therefore, using the sentence, she may say something true at one time, something false, at another. Or, someone who uses a sentence containing a first-person pronoun concerns herself with the subject of this use of the sentence. Thus one subject may say something true with that sentence, another, something false. It is natural to put this by saying that such sentences are true or false relative to the time when they are used and the person who uses them.

We can generalize this by introducing the concept of a context of use: the context is a set of features of a given use of a sentence. Our examples above will motivate us to include in a context of use the subject who is using the sentence and the time when she is. More can be added, should there be sentences that relate themselves to further features of their use.<sup>5</sup> Then we can say: whether someone says something true using a given sentence depends on the context in which she uses it.<sup>6</sup>

Whether one says something true in using a sentence depends on the context of one's use of it. The semantics in question represents this as follows: what one says with a given sentence is true not simpliciter, but relative to a context. This introduces a new kind of proposition, a c-proposition, as we shall call it: something true at a context. C-propositions are to be contents of speech acts and of acts of thought that those speech acts express: when someone makes an assertion using the sentence "I am hungry", then what he asserts is a proposition that is true at a context; when someone thinks something whose expression in language would require the use of the sentence "I am hungry", then what he thinks is a proposition that is true at a context.

Once c-propositions are introduced, nothing stands in the way of assigning such propositions to sentences regardless of whether these sentences relate themselves to features of their use; nothing stands in the way of thinking of every judgment as having a content that is true at a context of judging it. (Or—these are notational variants—nothing stands in the way of taking, in all cases, what is judged or asserted to be a set of—not possible worlds, but—pairs of a world and a context, or centered worlds.) Propositions associated with judgments that are not first-personal will turn out to be true with respect to all speakers or thinkers if they are true with respect to one. In this sense, all proposi-

tions will be related to the one who thinks them, and thus in this sense, it may be said that all propositions are first-person propositions. This is a technical ploy; it has no philosophical significance. In the same way, all sentences may be treated as bearing a tense, even if they are tenseless. They will turn out to be true at all times if they are true at one.

Frege introduced propositions (thoughts, he called them) to account for the objectivity of judgment. A proposition provides the measure of validity of the act of judging it: a judgment is valid if and only if the proposition to which it is the assent is true. The proposition, representing the condition of its own truth, represents the condition under which it is correct to assert it. C-propositions, which are true relative to a context, cannot serve this function. For a c-proposition represents a condition under which it is true at a context. Therefore it does not settle whether an act of asserting it is correct. It settles it *provided a context*, a context that the c-proposition itself does *not* provide. So we can say that an assertion is correct if and only if the c-proposition it asserts is true relative to the context in which it, the c-proposition, is asserted.

She who asserts something does so thinking it correct to assert it. It follows that what she thinks as she asserts something is not exhausted by what she asserts, if that is a c-proposition. Her thought of her assertion as correct must bring the c-proposition to a context; it must select a context from all contexts. The c-proposition that she asserts does not do this. So the thought of someone who thinks it correct to assert what she does brings together two things: a c-proposition and the context in which she asserts this c-proposition.

This is noted in the literature when the manner in which c-propositions are to inform the use of language is being discussed. For example, John MacFarlane explains that, in making assertions, we try to conform to a rule that enjoins us to assert only what is true at the context in which we assert it: “When we speak, in the normal case, we try to use sentences that are true at our contexts” (*Assessment Sensitivity*, p. 53; cf. *Assessment Sensitivity*, p. 101, the “Truth Rule”). And David Lewis explains that, when we want to tell someone something, we find a sentence that is true at our context and assert it.<sup>7</sup>

What someone asserts is not what she thinks, thinking it correct to assert it. These two things differ not in the way in which “is greater” differs

from “is smaller”. They differ in the way in which “is greater” differs from “is greater than 4”. A number is not greater simpliciter; it is greater *than some number*. When we fix what number it is relative to which a given number is to be greater, then the relativity is removed: a number is greater than 4 (or not) simpliciter. In the same way, what someone asserts is true, not simpliciter, but at a context. What someone thinks, thinking it correct to assert it, fixes a context at which what she asserts is to be true. Thus it removes the relativity and is true simpliciter.

It is worthwhile to dwell on the distinction of a given c-proposition from a thought to the effect that an assertion of that c-proposition is correct. A large part of a semantic theory will concern itself with c-propositions and their compositional semantics. Thus it may seem that c-propositions are the main topic; they are what the semantic theory is about. Yet, the concept of a c-proposition can claim to be a semantic concept only if c-propositions can be shown to inform the use of language. And they can inform this use only by figuring in the thoughts of those who use the language, as these think how to use it and how it is correct to use it. Thus the soundness of the concept of a c-proposition depends on there being this structure to the thought of someone who uses a sentence to make an assertion: thinking it correct to use the sentence in the way that she does, she thinks that a c-proposition is true at the context in which she uses it.

Someone who thinks it correct to assert what he does brings together what he asserts and a definite context, the context relative to which what he asserts must be true if he is to be right to assert it. Let us consider how he does so. We can think of what he asserts, the c-proposition, as providing a rule that specifies in general terms how a context must be in order for the c-proposition to be true relative to it. The c-proposition is brought to a context as this rule is applied to that context. Let [I am hungry] designate the c-proposition associated with the sentence “I am hungry”. [I am hungry] provides the following rule: [I am hungry] is true relative to a context in which it is used (judged, asserted) if the speaker in that context (the one who uses, judges, asserts it) is hungry. She who asserts [I am hungry] applies this rule: she understands that her assertion of [I am hungry] will be correct provided that the speaker who asserts it is hungry. Realizing that she is that speaker, she under-

stands that she is right to assert [I am hungry] because she is hungry. (We are supposing she is indeed hungry.)

We said this account of first-person thought lets us distinguish, within first-person thought, something objective, something that is as it is anyway, from its being thought. It is not the c-proposition [I am hungry] that bears this articulation. What bears this articulation is the thought of her who asserts [I am hungry], thinking it correct to assert it, or the thought of her who judges [I am hungry], thinking it valid to judge that. As she thinks she is right to assert what she does, namely [I am hungry], she thinks, first, that it is right on account of the speaker's being hungry, and, second, that that speaker is herself. These are separable elements because the rule—that [I am hungry] is true at a context provided the speaker of that context is hungry—does not of itself identify the context to which it is applied.

We distinguish a c-proposition as what is asserted from what someone thinks who asserts it, thinking it correct to assert it: she thinks that the c-proposition she asserts is true at the context in which she asserts it. This is a first-person thought; it is a thought she would express by saying "[I am hungry] is true relative to my context, the context in which I am asserting it". If she identified the context in any other way, not as *her own* context, not as the context of *her own* assertion, then she would not, in thinking that [I am hungry] is true relative to that context, think that she is right to assert what she does so. (Here and in what follows, the pronouns "her own" are forms of the first-person pronoun; they are that pronoun in *oratio obliqua*.) This, too, is perfectly explicit in the relevant literature. We quoted MacFarlane: we try to say something that is true at *our* context.

What our subject thinks, thinking it correct to assert what she does, namely [I am hungry], is something she would express by using a first-person pronoun. Now, according to the theory we are considering, what someone thinks, thinking something she would express by "I \_\_", is a c-proposition: something true not simpliciter, but relative to a context. But a c-proposition is *not* a thought of a c-proposition's being true at a context. And therefore it is *not* a thought of the correctness of an assertion. We come to such a thought as we distinguish, again, what our subject thinks, thinking [[I am hungry] is true relative to my context], from



what she thinks, thinking it correct to think *that*. Our subject's thought that she is right to assert [I am hungry] is not what she thinks, thinking [It is right to assert [I am hungry] in my context]. Rather it is what she thinks, thinking that it is correct to think *that*. For she understands that [It is right to assert [I am hungry] in the context in which I am asserting it] is true relative to all and only the contexts relative to which [I am hungry] is true. And she knows that the context in which she thinks [It is right to assert [I am hungry] in my context] is the same as the context in which she is asserting [I am hungry].<sup>8</sup> But again, as our subject thinks that the proposition [It is right to assert [I am hungry] in the context in which I am asserting it] is true relative to the context of *her own* thinking it, she thinks a first-person thought. And so on.

We never reach the thought of someone who thinks it is right to assert what she does. We never reach that thought *if* it is a thought to the effect that something is true at the context in which it is asserted. This shows that it is no such thought. It does not bear this articulation. The concept of a c-proposition is of no use if we inquire into the consciousness of those who judge and express their judgments in language.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.5. Rules and the first person

A c-proposition provides a rule that states how a context must be in order for it to be correct to assert that c-proposition in that context. When we deny that the thought of someone who makes an assertion, thinking it right to assert what she does, is articulated into a c-proposition and a context at which the proposition is to be true, it seems we are denying that speakers of a language understand such rules. We seem to be saying that she who uses the sentence "I am hungry" to make an assertion fails to understand that someone who makes an assertion with this sentence says something true provided that she who makes the assertion is hungry, or that she who uses "I" does not understand that someone who uses "I" speaks of herself.

We are not saying this. What we say is: the rules in question are first-person thoughts and contained in the self-consciousness of the speaker.

We reject the idea that the first person enters not—not yet—with the rule itself, but only in its application *to oneself*. There is no such application. For the relevant rules are rules one follows. And following a rule is not applying it to oneself.

A rule is a general description of a way of acting. In order for someone to follow a rule, it does not suffice that what he is doing fall under this description; he must understand himself to conform to this description in doing what he is doing. The rule must be inside him, in his thought; he must act with it, or from it. Aristotle makes this point when he explains that to be virtuous is not only to act in accordance with the right concept (*kata ton orthon logon*), but *with* the right concept (*meta tou orthou logou*).<sup>10</sup> Kant makes the point in general when he distinguishes things that act according to laws from things that act according to the representation of laws (deriving their actions from a law), and specifically when he contrasts action conforming to duty (*pflichtgemäß*) with action *from* duty (*aus Pflicht*).<sup>11</sup> Wittgenstein's reflections on following a rule are a meditation on this character of rules.<sup>12</sup>

She who follows a rule thinks herself to conform to the rule. This is a first-person thought: it is internal to it that she who thinks it, thinking someone to conform to a rule, is the one who she thinks conforms to the rule. It may seem that, in this thought, she applies the rule to herself. We shall discuss this idea in relation to the rules that are our present interest. But what we will say applies to rules as such.

Let us write out the reasoning in which I bring the rule governing the use of "I" to bear on myself.

(R: Rule) A speaker of English who uses "I" speaks of herself.

(C: Condition of application) I am a speaker of English.

(A: Application) Therefore, when I use "I", I speak of myself.

A speaker of English uttering "I" does not speak of herself unless she understands herself to speak of herself in using this word. If she does not know she is uttering "I", or thinks that "I" is a means of addressing the one to whom one speaks (as some children do), then she does not speak of herself in uttering "I". So the statement of the rule is elliptical. Stated more fully, it is:

(R') A speaker of English who uses "I" speaks of herself, understanding herself to do so.

But now we remember that—this is the idea we are reducing to absurdity—understanding oneself to use "I" to speak of oneself involves applying the rule (R) to oneself, thinking R, A and C. We must include this in our statement of the rule, articulating the understanding with which someone must use "I" if she is to speak of herself.

(R') A speaker of English who uses "I" speaks of herself, understanding (R) [that a speaker of English who uses "I" speaks of herself], understanding that she is a speaker of English, and concluding that, as she is using "I", she speaks of herself.

A speaker of English who understands that a speaker of English who uses "I" speaks of herself understands that such a speaker does so with understanding. If this understanding consists in her applying the rule (R) to herself, we must include this in our statement:

(R'') A speaker of English who uses "I" speaks of herself, understanding that (R') [a speaker of English who uses "I" speaks of herself, understanding (R) [that a speaker of English who uses "I" speaks of herself], understanding that she is a speaker of English, and concluding that, as she is using "I", she speaks of herself], understanding that she is a speaker of English, and concluding that, as she is using "I", she speaks of herself.

And so on.

This shows that a speaker of English, using "I" to speak of herself, understanding herself to do so, does not come by this understanding by applying a rule to herself. As the rule is one that she follows, the rule is *her* rule. The first person is inside every rule, for following a rule is self-conscious. (A lucid notation would arrange words stating a rule in such a way as to spell a sign of the first person.) Since the first person is inside every rule, first-person thought cannot be comprehended as the application of a rule.

## 2.6. Practical thought

The first-person pronoun signifies self-consciousness; it signifies the internality of its being thought to what is thought. Therefore there is no such thing as a first-person proposition. There has been opposition to the idea that first-person thought is a propositional attitude. This is helpful, for it weakens the immunity to reflection enjoyed by the idea. Yet the opposition is limited; it limits itself by thinking of the first person as marking out a special class of thoughts. Therefore it does not touch the real difficulty, which lies in the self-consciousness of thought. The first person is not a kind of thought but thought.

As the opposition is limited in this way, it is not against the general idea that judgment is a propositional attitude. It is against the idea that first-person judgment is. Thus it has been proposed that first-person thought does not relate to a special kind of proposition, but is a special form of predication: self-predication. Specifically, it has been urged that practical thought—thought that is efficacious in such a way as to realize what it thinks—is not a propositional attitude: my thought that I am doing *A*, when I am doing it intentionally, is an act of self-predicating, practically self-predicating, the concept of doing *A*. This need not be wrong. But insofar as it conceives the first person as circumscribing a certain class of thoughts, it detracts from the root of the difficulty. That root is the self-consciousness, that is, the objectivity, of thought.

The first person, the *I think*, is in any thought, be it theoretical or practical. This has motivated some people to extend notions that characterize practical thought to thought as such. There is a literature on epistemic agency, believing as activity, and so on. This smothers the question how the objectivity of thought relates to its self-consciousness. In fact, the discussion of epistemic agency hardens the distinction of force and content. It extends practical concepts from *I am doing A* to *I think that p*, representing *thinking that p* as a case of *doing something*: it, too, is a form of agency. As there is activity in splitting a piece of timber (*doing A*) there is activity in thinking the sun is rising (*thinking p*). This is to be a point about the attitude: in affirming the content, I am not in a passive state; I am doing something, I am active. It is not a point about

the content. There is no notion that the *I think* is inside *p*, no notion that reflecting on the *I think* is reflecting on *p*. The self-consciousness of thought is not in view in the infatuation with agency.

Nor is the objectivity of thought appreciated as the motive of the force-content distinction. The objectivity of thought appears to reside in this, that thought is beholden to and bound by something other than itself. The reason for holding that first-person thought is an attitude toward a proposition is the idea that this articulation constitutes the objectivity of thought: objectivity requires that what is thought be other than the act of thinking it. Now practical thought is objective. Therefore, unless we comprehend how objectivity and self-consciousness can be conjoined, the idea that practical thought is not a propositional attitude cannot carry conviction. The practical character of practical thought does not explain the unity of self-consciousness and objectivity. On the contrary, the unity of self-consciousness and objectivity explains how there can be practical consciousness that is *thought*.

## 2.7. The alleged explanatory power of the force-content distinction

Thought is objective. That is to say, it is self-conscious: a thought is the first-person thought of itself. Therefore what is thought cannot be isolated from the act of thinking it; it cannot be understood as the attachment of a force to a content. This may seem hard to accept. The distinction is fundamental to contemporary philosophy: in philosophy of mind, epistemology, philosophy of language, and beyond. It seems we must deploy it if we are to make sense of a wide variety of phenomena in the domains with which these disciplines concern themselves. For example, we need to distinguish force from content in order to describe disagreement among different subjects. X and Y disagree as something is the same among them, and something different: they relate to the same content, but take different attitudes toward it; one assents to, the other dissents from, this content. Further, we need to distinguish force and content if we are to represent the progress one makes from asking a question to answering it. In asking a question one relates to a content,

the same content that one affirms in answering the question. More generally, we need to recognize a variety of ways of relating to the same content: denying that  $p$ , doubting that  $p$ , wondering whether  $p$ , supposing that  $p$ , etc. Further, the distinction is needed if we are to understand inferences that involve hypothetical judgments. When someone reasons  $p$ , *if  $p$  then  $q$ , therefore  $q$* , then the same must be thought in the first and in the second premise, if the inference is not to rest on an equivocation. However, to assert *if  $p$  then  $q$*  is not to assert  $p$ . So the force, the assent to the proposition, cannot be inside the proposition to which it is the assent. The force-content distinction enables us to describe and understand all these phenomena. Thus it has great explanatory power. Giving it up is costly. Unless we are being given assurance that we will be able to understand all this without that distinction, we do well to keep it.

This would make sense if the force-content distinction did. But it does not. What is confused in itself does not provide understanding. As the force-content distinction makes no sense, it has *no* explanatory power. There is *no* cost to abandoning it. On the contrary. It costs to retain it. Using the distinction, we will be certain not to understand what we seek to understand; we will be certain to distort it and impede its comprehension. The confusion of the force-content distinction will spread to everything we undertake to comprehend in terms of it.<sup>13</sup> It is true that abandoning the distinction requires us to rethink a vast array of questions, in many disciplines. It would be wrong to think that therefore we do better to hold on to it until we have rethought all those questions. For, holding on to the force-content distinction, we arrest ourselves in incomprehension. It is painful to be at sea. But it is infinitely better than to be under the illusion of understanding something one does not understand.

## Chapter Three

# Denial of Self-Consciousness

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### 3.1. Knowledge of self-consciousness

The idea that judgment is articulated into force and content is confused. If one uses this distinction to think about anything—inference, disagreement, what have you—confusion spreads to one's thought of that. This is so because judgment is self-conscious: in judging what I do, I think myself judging it. The *I judge* is inside what I judge.

The patent unacceptability of the claim that to think something through the force-content distinction is to be locked in incomprehension may be taken to reduce to absurdity its alleged ground: the thought that judgment is self-conscious. Obviously, judgment is a propositional attitude; obviously, the assent to a proposition is no part of that to which it assents. The thought of an act of assent, always and as such, is distinct from the thought of that to which it assents. In particular, my thought of judging that things are so is a different act of the mind from my judging that they are so. The former is about my judgment, a psychic act, a mental state; the latter, in the usual case, is not; it is about something that does not involve my judgment, my mind, my psyche. It is about a mind-independent reality.

I said thought was self-conscious. I said judging that things are so was thinking it right so to judge. So I said. But is it true? Perhaps thought

is not, anyway not as such, self-conscious. How can I exclude this? Unless I have got strong grounds, the above *reductio* will carry more conviction than my thesis.

Is it really the case that judging is taking it to be valid so to judge? To ask this is to think that, in saying that a judgment is the thought of its own validity, I state an assumption or propose a hypothesis. Someone may undertake to reject the assumption; or he may think it is plausible. In any case, a deeper reflection is marked out: one that inquires whether the assumption is true. However, if judging is thinking it valid so to judge, then there is no such question. If what I say is true—if judging that things are so is being conscious of the validity of so judging—then this is something that I, that anyone, knows, knows in any judgment, knows insofar as she judges at all. If what I say is true, then saying it is not making an assumption or proposing a hypothesis.

So it is, one might retort, on the assumption that what I say is true. Still I must give arguments that show that indeed it is true, arguments that rule out that things are otherwise. For there are people who think otherwise; they need to be addressed. But if what I say is true, then the demand for argument does not show intellectual acumen, but betrays a lack of understanding. An argument establishes that something is so by citing grounds for it. Embracing the argument involves affirming these grounds. An argument rests judgment on judgment. But if what I say is true, then the knowledge of it is contained in any judgment. There is no meaning in the idea that I might come to know it by turning to a further judgment. Therefore it is wrong to say that there are people who take a different view. If what I say is true, then there are no such people. There are no such people because there is no such thing as taking a different view. If something is known in any judgment, then there is no such thing as saying “no” to it. What is known in any judgment has no contrary.

Judgment is self-conscious: judging that things are so is understanding oneself so to judge, I say. In this, I am speaking of judgment, and I purport to express knowledge in saying what I do. The term “science” in its traditional use signifies an articulated body of general knowledge. This is the meaning of “*episteme*” in ancient Greek and the meaning of “*Wissenschaft*” in German. As what I say about judgment is to be knowledge,



it is to belong to a science: an episteme, a Wissenschaft. If judgment is self-conscious, then the science of judgment is peculiar: it is the science without contrary.

If judgment is self-conscious, then the first and fundamental apprehension of an act as a judgment *is* the act so apprehended. The first use of the concept of judgment, in which the science of it must be grounded, is the self-consciousness of judgment; it is the *I judge*. The science of judgment is nothing other than the articulation of the self-consciousness of judgment. And what is contained in the self-consciousness of judgment anyone always already knows: as the *I judge* is inside *p*, inside the object of judgment, judging anything at all is thinking *I judge*. It follows that the science of judgment, articulating the *I judge*, says, says only, what has no contrary. For there is no judging counter to what is known in any judgment. The science of judgment does not stake out a position, located in a space of positions structured by relations of exclusion or inclusion. It says only what anyone always already knows, knows insofar as she judges at all.

The first thing known in the science of judgment, the first thing known in self-consciousness, is—self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is known in, and only in, self-consciousness. Self-consciousness is its own science. There is no such thing as a theory of self-consciousness, much less are there competing theories of self-consciousness, if a theory is knowledge of something that is and is as it is independently of being known in that theory. It is a traditional thought that philosophy cannot propose hypotheses, cannot make assumptions, can say only what is thought together with its own unconditional necessity. Wherever this idea is propounded, philosophy is understood to be the science without contrary; it is understood to be the science of judgment, the science of self-consciousness, or, simply, self-consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.2. Removal of obstacles

Judging that things are so is taking it to be valid so to judge. If this is true, then there is no such thing as questioning its truth. If it is true, then

it has no contrary. As it is known in any judgment, there is no such thing as a judgment that places itself in opposition to it. Now there *are* people who are prepared to say that it is one thing to judge and another thing to think it valid so to judge. They will use these words. This does not mean that they reject what I say. It does not mean that there is such a thing as rejecting what I say. If what I say is true, then they only seem to say something, while their words, used in the manner in which they intend to use them, bear no meaning.

This may seem an unbearable arrogance: not only do I proclaim that my opponents are wrong; I say they do not even manage to state a view. I am not content to beat my enemies, I desire to annihilate them. For who are you, if you do not have a view?<sup>2</sup> The reproach depends on an assumption: that it is easy to say something, while difficult to say something true. The reproach is ill-conceived if the converse is true, if it is difficult to say something, while no achievement at all to say something true. This is how it would be in a science, should there be one, that aspires to say, say only, what has no contrary. This is how it would be in the science of self-consciousness. If what I say is true, there may be such a science. In this science, it will be inappropriate to think of one's fellows as opponents or adversaries. It will make no sense to think of oneself as defending or attacking positions. It will be pointless to bite bullets. This science will be a perfectly demilitarized zone. It will be equally senseless to think of oneself as putting one's money somewhere, as hedging one's bets, as paying a price. This science will be a perfectly extra-economical zone. If what I say is true, it may belong to such a science.

Judging is being conscious of the validity of so judging. If this is true, then it is the first thing known in the science without contrary. As it has no contrary, there is no such thing as an argument validating it, an argument excluding its contrary. How then can I respond to the objection that what I say is false, that it is not the case that judging things to be so is taking it to be valid so to judge? How can I respond without losing my grip on what I say? If judging something is thinking it valid to judge it, then this is something anyone always already knows, knows in any judgment. Yet there may be obstacles that impede the explicit recognition of what is so known. I may set out to remove such obstacles. To do this

is not to give grounds for thinking true what I say as opposed to thinking true the contrary. If judging is being conscious of the validity of so judging, then this thought has no contrary. To remove obstacles to its explicit recognition is to consider what seems contrary to it and bring out that there is nothing there.

We remove obstacles in this way. We consider the idea that judgment is not self-conscious, that it is not the thought of its own validity. As we try to think this, we find that it makes nonsense of the very idea of one judgment's excluding another, of judging one thing on the basis of another, of someone's challenging someone else's claim. Thus there is no such thing as thinking that judgment is not self-conscious, taking oneself to exclude that it is, no such thing as comprehending something to show that judgment fails to be self-conscious, no such thing as challenging someone else's claim that it is. For, all these are self-conscious acts of judgment.

### 3.3. Second-order judgment

We try to think the following. The thought of the validity of a judgment is a distinct act of the mind from this judgment. It is a judgment about this judgment, a second-order judgment. It is a matter of course that first-order judgments precede second-order judgments; knowledgeable judgment about the objective world precedes reflection on one's acts of judgment. Let us see whether there is a thought here.

If, in judging, there is no thought of the validity of so judging, then there is no *inner* obstacle to judging something together with its contrary. I mean, there is no obstacle *of which I am conscious in judging*. The consciousness of an obstacle would have to reside in the recognition that, as things are so, it cannot be right to judge that they are not. And we laid it down that this recognition is not the same act as the judgment. If we are to think wrong the judgment that things are not so, this thought will have to be added to, it will be a separate act from, the judgment that things are so.

Let us add it. I now judge—this is a second-order judgment—that it is wrong to judge that things are not so. Now there are these judgments:

I judge that things are so, and I judge, second order, that it is wrong to judge that they are not so. What holds of judgment holds of a second-order judgment: it is no thought of its own validity. I am, in my second-order judgment, not conscious of any obstacle to conjoining it, this second-order judgment, with the contrary second-order judgment, the judgment that it is right to judge that things are not so. But if I am not, in judging it wrong, conscious of any obstacle to judging it right to judge that things are not so, then I am not, in so judging, conscious of any obstacle to judging that things are not so.

Bereft of the thought of its own validity, judgments lose all logical traction. They lie side by side in the mind of the subject and make no logical contact. We do not recover traction by adding second-order judgments; we merely deposit more inert judgments in the mind. In order to bring out the generality of the point, we may elaborate it further. If a judgment is not a thought of its own validity, then there is no *inner* necessity to judgment in inference, no necessity of *which I am conscious in judging*. Suppose I judge  $p$  and  $p \supset q$ . There is nothing of which I am conscious in so judging that supplies me with the idea that it is necessary to judge  $q$ . This consciousness would reside in a recognition that, as  $p$  and  $p \supset q$ , it cannot be right to judge  $\neg q$ . And we laid it down that there is no such recognition in judging  $p$  and  $p \supset q$ . We may try to add this recognition as a second-order judgment, the judgment that, given that  $p$  and  $p \supset q$ , I must judge  $q$ . But this second-order judgment is not a thought of its own validity. So I am not, in judging that I must judge  $q$ , conscious of anything that stands in the way of judging that I may judge  $\neg q$ . And this is to say that I am not conscious of anything that stands in the way of judging  $\neg q$ .

Without a thought of its validity inside the judgment, there is no traction among judgments. There is equally none among judgers. I say things are so, you say they are not. Now we laid it down that the thought of the validity of a judgment is a distinct act of the mind from that judgment; it is a second-order judgment. Hence, as you say things are not so, expressing your judgment that they are not, you have no idea of the validity of your judgment; a fortiori, you have no idea of the invalidity of mine. Mutatis mutandis for me. In speaking as you do, you express no consciousness of opposition of your judgment to mine.

Let us add this consciousness. You judge, not only that things are not so, but that I am wrong to judge that they are. I do the same, *mutatis mutandis*. These are second-order judgments. But judgment, a *fortiori* second-order judgment, is no thought of its own validity. In judging that you are wrong to judge as you do, I am not conscious of the validity of this second-order judgment. Neither are you, of yours. Hence, in my second-order judgment, I am conscious of no opposition to your second-order judgment. You judge, second order, that my judgment is wrong and yours is right. I judge, second order, that your judgment is wrong and mine is right. You say: you are wrong; I say, I am right. Neither you nor I have, in so judging, any notion of being in conflict with the other.

If a judgment is not conscious of its own validity, there is no repulsion of contrary judgments; the idea of contrariety dissolves. There is no necessitation of judgment by judgment; the idea of inference dissolves. If judgment is not conscious of its own validity, there is no opposition of subjects in judgment; the idea of one subject challenging another dissolves. It follows that there is no such thing as putting forth a claim by the words "the thought of the validity of a judgment is a separate act from this judgment", understanding oneself therein to oppose a contrary claim. There is no such thing as putting forth a claim with these words, thinking of oneself as stating something for which there may be a reason. There is no such thing as putting forth a claim with these words, thinking to challenge someone who says: a judgment is the thought of itself as valid. We asked, Are there not people who disagree and hold the contrary view? There are not. There is no disagreeing with this, no placing oneself in opposition to it.

Our reflections on the ostensible notion that judging is one thing, thinking one's judgment valid, another, are no argument. They are an exercitium. We do not, through them, acquire knowledge that we lacked. We clarify the knowledge we do have, knowledge anyone always already has. We clarify its logical character: it is knowledge that has no contrary.

### 3.4. Holding true a thought

The idea that the primary manner in which we are conscious of our own judgments is a second-order judgment is popular. But there are also many who want to resist it. However, it is easy to find second-orderism repulsive, while retaining soft feelings for the force-content distinction. It will be worth our while to make clear that resisting second-orderism cannot stop short of rejecting the force-content distinction.

If judgment is articulated into force and content, then thinking oneself to judge that things are so is a different act of the mind from judging that they are. This is to say that the thought of the act of assent is second order. Therefore Frege's distinction of force and content has the consequence that we found the idea that the thought of the validity of a judgment is a second-order judgment to have: if judgment were articulated into force and content, then judgment would lie dead, deprived of all logical traction.

Here is what we think as we conceive judgment as a propositional attitude. In judging that things are so, I assign the value *true* to a thought. This is different from thinking it correct so to judge; it is different from thinking valid—not the content, the proposition, the Fregean thought, but—the act of judging. It is different because the content of the judgment is distinct from the act of affirming it. However, it is but a small step from assenting to a thought to thinking it right to assent to it. The only thing needed is the concept of judgment. For, someone who possesses this concept knows that it is correct to hold a given thought true if and only if that thought is true. Knowing this and judging a given thought to be true, she can infer that it is right to hold that thought true. Let us suppose she infers this. Now we have staged a return of judgment of sorts. It is not that the judgment returns to itself; rather, the proposition judged returns to the act of judging this proposition: she who possesses the concept of judgment can expand the content she affirms, adding to it the thought of the rightness of affirming that content. She can expand *p* to *p*, and so it is right to assent to *p*.

She now holds a certain thought true and thinks it is right to hold that thought true. Thus she thinks that someone who assigns the value *true*

to the thought that  $p$  judges correctly in doing so. Or else she thinks that, were someone to assign the value *true* to  $p$ —she herself, for example—he would judge correctly. While she knows this, she does not on that account and therein know that her judgment  $p$  is valid. Nor for that matter does she therein think that her judgment  $p$ , *and therefore it is right to assent to  $p$* —the expanded judgment—is valid. For all we said, she does not know that she holds that thought true. Thus she does not know that her thought about a possible judgment and its validity have a bearing on her.

Suppose someone assigns the value *true* to a given thought and, furthermore, assigns the value *true* to the negation of that thought. Stipulating that she is aware that it is correct to hold a thought true if and only if it is true, she will be able to infer that someone—she herself, for example—who assigns the value true to these two thoughts goes wrong in at least one of his judgments. However, nothing we said suggests that she knows that she does this: assign the value *true* to a thought and its negation. These are the thoughts she holds true:  $p$ ; *it is right to assent to  $p$* ; *non- $p$* ; *it is wrong to assent to  $p$* ; *someone who assents both to  $p$  and to non- $p$  goes wrong in at least one of these acts of assent*. As she and her judgments figure in none of these thoughts, her assent to them does not constitute a recognition that anything is amiss with her and her judgments.

Finally, suppose someone affirms the thought  $A$  and the thought  $B$ . And suppose she knows that, if  $A$  and  $B$  are true, then  $C$  must be. We may imagine that, having assigned the value *true* to both  $A$  and  $B$ , she judges that  $C$ , assigning the value *true* to  $C$ . However, what we said so far gives us no reason to think that, upon being asked why she holds  $C$  true, she will have anything to say. For, nothing we said represents her as knowing that she assigns the value *true* to  $C$ , nor that she assigns this value to  $A$  and  $B$ . Nothing we said suggests that, apart from thinking of  $A$ ,  $B$ , and  $C$  and their truth values, the subject thinks of herself and her acts of judgment.

We can stipulate that someone who assigns the value *true* to a thought knows that she does. Then she can bring to bear on herself her reflections on how the truth of thoughts affects the validity of acts of holding them true. But how, within our present frame of suppositions, do we think

she knows that she assigns truth values to certain thoughts? We cannot say that she knows that she holds a given thought true because judging something is understanding oneself to judge it. For then assigning the value *true* to a thought would *be* thinking it valid to assign this value to that thought. The act of holding true a content would be inside that content and the distinction of force and content would collapse. So we must conceive her knowledge that she assigns the value *true* to a given thought to be a distinct act of the mind from her assigning this value to that thought. This we discussed. The ostensible return of judgment, in the return of the proposition to the act of assenting to it, is no return at all.

It is hard to see this clearly because Frege's notion of what is judged—what he calls the content, as distinct from the force—does capture the objectivity and therewith the self-consciousness of judgment. It does so in this way. A Fregean thought, on its own, independently of any determination provided by the act of judging it as distinct from what is judged, determines the condition under which it is correct to judge it. (This distinguishes a Fregean thought from a c-proposition.) In this resides the objectivity of judgment: no given character of the judging subject, no character of hers that is not thought in judging what she does, enters into the assessment of whether it is correct to judge as she does so. This objectivity of judgment is its self-consciousness: as what is judged is nothing other than the condition of the correctness of judging it, judging things to be so is nothing other than thinking it correct so to judge. Frege's error does not lie in conceiving what is judged in this way. It lies in conjoining this true conception of what is judged with the unintelligible idea that the act of judgment is external to what is judged.

It is instructive to see this confusion of Frege's at work. In his essay "Active Belief", Matthew Boyle tries to bring out how judgment is spontaneous, that is, self-conscious, while describing it as an act of holding true a thought. In consequence, he elides the distinction of the proposition from the act of holding it true. He writes (I number the sentences): "(1) When I speak of a subject who believes P as regarding P as to-be-believed, I do not mean that she must hold a further belief with the content: P is to be believed. (2) I mean rather to characterize



the mode of her relation to the proposition *P* itself: she must take it to be true, and thus to meet the standard that any sound belief must meet. (3) This will equip her, if she possesses the concept of belief, to frame the judgment that *P* is to be believed, but even if she has no such thought, her stance toward the proposition *P*—acceptance of it as a true representation of what is the case—already entails that such a judgment would be warranted” (“Active Belief”, fn. 28). The antecedent of the pronoun “it” in (2) is “the proposition *P*”. The same pronoun is the logical subject of the coordinated predicative clause “meets the standard that any sound belief must meet”. This requires that the term “belief”, in that clause, signify a proposition, something believed, as opposed to the act of believing it. Yet if it means that, the sentence makes no sense. For it is not the case that a proposition is supposed to be true; the propositions *p* and  $\neg p$  do equally well as propositions, yet one of them will be false. So perhaps we should rewrite the sentence: “She takes the proposition to be true and thus takes the act of believing it to meet the standard that any sound act of believing something must meet.” But now we can no longer hold that “she takes *p* to be true” and “she takes believing *p* to meet the inner measure of believing” describe one and the same act. For we are supposing that the concept of belief does not figure in *p*. And therefore thinking *p* to be true is not as such thinking of an act of believing and its soundness. Boyle acknowledges this in (3): there is a step from taking *p* to be true to thinking it right to believe *p*. For there is a condition under which alone this step can be taken, a condition not provided by and in the act of taking *p* to be true: “if she possesses the concept of belief”. If she possesses this concept, she can move from taking *p* to be true to taking it to be true that it is correct to believe *p*. This is a case of drawing out consequences of what one takes to be true. As we saw, in neither of these takings does the subject think of herself and the correctness of her takings.

It is obvious that there is no such thing as judging *p* and *non-p*, comprehending that it cannot be right to judge *p* and *non-p*. It is obvious that there is no such thing as judging *C*, comprehending that it is correct to judge *C*, since *A* and *B*, while being dumbfounded by the question why one judges *C*. That this is obvious does not show that holding true a proposition is being conscious—in some manner, pre-reflectively,

say, or unthematically—of assenting to that proposition. It shows that judging is not assenting to a proposition. It shows that the idea that judging is holding true a thought makes no sense. We cannot describe judgment as referring to the truth while denying it the return to itself.<sup>3</sup>

### 3.5. The pervasiveness of self-consciousness

Suppose we recognize that it is not possible to represent the self-consciousness of judgment as a second-order judgment about a given judgment, and suppose we see that, therefore, judgment cannot be comprehended in the way Frege proposed: as attaching a force to a forceless content, as an act of affirming a thought that is free of affirmation. Yet we may want to resist the thought that judgment as such is self-conscious. We may try thinking that, while judgment may be self-conscious, not all judgment is; the basic form of judgment does not return to itself. This comes to nothing, because self-consciousness pervades all consciousness of the subject of judgment; it *is* the subject of judgment.

We are considering the idea that, while there is judging in such a way as to take it to be valid so to judge, not all judgments bear this character. Self-conscious judgment is a sophisticated mode of judgment, alongside which there is a more simple mode. (Perhaps there are two systems. Perhaps they can be located in the brain.) Judging in the simpler mode, one is conscious only of the object of one's judgment without a thought of one's judgment and its validity. Sophisticated adults, academics perhaps, philosophy professors sometimes, in reflective moments, judge in such a way that, *in* judging, they assert the validity of their judgment. By contrast, children, less sophisticated adults and philosophy professors most of the time straightforwardly judge how things are, without therein thinking of their judgment and its validity. So it is false to say without qualification that judging is thinking oneself to judge. There are two modes of judgment: judgment that returns to itself and judgment that does not. Let us call them A-judgment and B-judgment.

Now, there is no such thing as thinking, in a B-judgment, of that of which one thinks in an A-judgment. And vice versa. For, that of which

one thinks in an A-judgment includes the validity of thinking this, while that of which one thinks in a B-judgment does not. The object of thought that returns to itself is such that thinking it, this object, *is* thinking it valid so to think. Hence, the object of a thought that returns to itself is not a possible object of a thought that does not return to itself. And vice versa.

We want to hold fixed an object of judgment and vary the manner in which it is thought, in the one case with consciousness of its being judged, in the other case without such a consciousness. (This idea bears witness to the continuing grip that the force-content distinction has on us.) But as judgment is self-conscious, the *I judge* pervades what is judged. There is no isolating what is judged from the thought of its being judged. Therefore there is no object of thought to which we can hold fast while depriving the thinking of it of self-consciousness.

The notion that self-conscious judgment is rare in human life, resting on a more primitive form of judgment that does not return to itself, suggests itself only as long as we think of B-judgment as a more simple mode of apprehending what is apprehended in a more reflective manner in an A-judgment. However, there is no advancing from B-judging something to A-judging *it*, the same thing, by reflecting on the validity of one's judgment. A subject of A-judgment, or a subject insofar as she A-judges—we imagined a philosophy professor—cannot be in conversation with a subject of B-judgment—a child or the philosopher in less academic moments, we thought—about something of which both are conscious in their respective judgments. They cannot because there is nothing of which both are conscious. And this is not all. We pretended to think that there may be someone, a philosophy professor, whose thought comprises both A- and B-judgments: sometimes she A-judges, sometimes she B-judges. But this is unintelligible. There is no such thing as holding together, in one act of the mind, the object of an A-judgment and the object of a B-judgment; there is no unity of consciousness among A- and B-judgments. Hence, insofar as we speak of subjects of consciousness, the subject of A-judgment and the subject of B-judgment are not one, but two. There is no such thing as someone, some one, who A-judges and B-judges.

We considered the idea that, while there is judgment that is the thought of its own validity, it is rare in human life; more common and more basic is another manner of judging, which does not return to itself. This is no idea at all. If someone judges in such a way that her judgment returns to itself, then this form—return to itself, self-consciousness—informs every aspect of her conscious existence. Otherwise she would be no one subject of consciousness at all, and the term “she” would bear no meaning.

### 3.6. Animals and children

This is the place to insert a note on the animal and the infant. These are of great interest in themselves, yet they are peripheral to the aims of the present essay. Therefore the note will be brief, and inconclusive; it will not itself provide comprehension, but point toward possible and actual work extending the thought of the present essay.

The animal and the child come up here because a powerful motive of the idea that human thought, in its basic form, does not involve the idea of its own validity is the notion that, if it did, then the subject of judgment would be isolated from children and from animals, and thus from her own animality. Distinguishing various strands in this notion, we can say, first, that the animality, the sensory and material existence, of the human being is nothing other than her self-consciousness. This must be developed further, but for our present purposes, the considerations advanced in the preceding section will do. Second, an isolation in consciousness of the human being from its own offspring would be terrible indeed. However, the first point just made entails a second one, namely, that the principle of the human child, from the moment it exists as its own being, is self-consciousness. This principle governs every relation of human beings to the human child.<sup>4</sup>

It would be worthwhile to think this through in relation to the very first days and months of infancy. However, here I want to make a casual remark relating to a later phase, beginning with the growth of the child into language, at around 15 months of age. It is surprising that there is the idea that specifically young children judge in a manner that involves

no consciousness of the validity of so judging, that they attend to the object of their judgment alone, not to their judging it. It is most obvious that children, as soon as they speak at all, judge in the consciousness of the validity of their judgment. A girl, not even two, sought to squeeze herself through a narrow opening. Her mother told her, "You won't fit through there." "Yes I will", she said, defiantly, and squeezed through. The girl was conscious of opposing her mother, and thus of the rightness of her statement and the wrongness of that of her mother. She did not speak of judgments and their validity. Perhaps she did not have these words. But the consciousness was there; it was at work in, indeed it *was* her interaction with her mother.

The concept of the animal is the concept of consciousness, sensory consciousness. Animals are subjects of desire, perception, and feeling. This essay makes no claim about animals. Yet we can consider, hypothetically, the idea that animal experience does not conform to the description Gareth Evans gives, and that we quoted above, of our experience: while animals have perception, they do not, *in* perceiving what they do, deploy the concept of perception; they do not experience what they do through the idea of an objective world. Their experience is not self-conscious; it does not return to itself. (We might add that their desire, too, does not return to itself: as St. Thomas puts it, while animals represent an end, they do not represent it *as an end*.<sup>5</sup> Animal desire, too, is not self-conscious, and that is to say, not objective.<sup>6</sup>) If this is right, then the object of animal perception is not the same as the object of human experience. Therefore, as we describe the object of animal perception, what we say is not that of which the animal is conscious. That of which we are conscious as the object of animal consciousness is not that of which the animal is conscious in its consciousness. This does not mean that animal consciousness is essentially concealed from us, that we necessarily falsify it as we represent it. Rather, that of which we are conscious in describing the object of animal consciousness is distinct from that of which the animal is conscious because our description is objectively valid. The distinction does not reflect an inadequacy of our judgment to its object, in the given case, animal consciousness. It reflects an inadequacy of animal consciousness to itself. Animal

consciousness is inadequate to itself, for it is not an adequate—not an objectively valid—consciousness of its object. Thus there is a strangeness in the animal, which, if we are allowed a paradoxical remark, is its essence. (There is no such strangeness in the human infant. It is ours, it is us, from the first.)

## Chapter Four

# The Science without Contrary

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### 4.1. Aristotle on the science of judgment

Judgment is objective: the validity of a judgment depends on what it judges alone, and on no given character of the subject judging it. This seems to mean that what is judged is one thing, the act of judging it, another; judgment decomposes into force and content: the object of judgment, the proposition, and the assent to it, the attitude. Then the thought of a judgment is not the same as the thought of what is judged in this judgment. The inquiry into the nature of judgment and, should we arrive at it, the knowledge and the science of that nature, is one thing; the inquiry into the nature of the objects of judgment and, should we arrive at it, the knowledge and the science of their nature, is another—except in the special case of judgments about judgments. Thus there are various sciences, distinguished according to their objects: physics, chemistry, biology, etc. Among these is the science of judgment, perhaps a branch of psychology, investigating a specific thing and its nature, alongside other things and their nature that we encounter in the world. However, as the objectivity of judgment is nothing other than its self-consciousness, this is not so.

In *Metaphysics* Γ, Aristotle distinguishes a certain *episteme* from all other *epistemai*, specifically physics and mathematics, by the mark that

it does not circumscribe for itself a domain of what is in order to inquire into the nature of what belongs to this domain. Rather, the distinguished science investigates what is as such, or what is insofar as it is.<sup>1</sup> In *De Partibus Animalium*, Aristotle asserts that *nous* does not fall within the domain of physics.<sup>2</sup> It does not lie within that domain, not because it lies outside it, in a different domain alongside that of physics. Rather, *nous* does not lie within the domain of physics because it cannot be included in any domain. For, just as the science of perception includes the objects of perception, so the science of judgment—knowledge of the nature of judgment—is at the same time the science of the object of judgment—knowledge of the nature of the object of judgment. And the object of judgment is everything. Judgment cannot be included in any domain because its object cannot be contained in any domain. Its object is illimitable. The science Aristotle describes in *Metaphysics* Γ is the science of judgment: not a science, but *the* science. The science of judgment is the science *überhaupt* because the object of judgment is the object *überhaupt*.

#### 4.2. The object *überhaupt*

As thought is self-conscious, the *I think* is inside what is thought. As the self-consciousness of thought is its objectivity, something is fit to be apprehended in a manner that is objective if and only if the act of apprehending it is internal to it. Reflecting on the object of objective thought is articulating the *I think*. And vice versa.

Philosophers are in the habit of indicating the object of judgment by the letter *p*. There is an insouciance with respect to this fateful letter. It stands ready quietly, unobtrusively, to assure us that we know what we are talking about. For example, when we do epistemology, we are interested in what it is for someone to know—know what? oh yes: *p*. If we inquire into rational requirements on action or intention, we ask what it is to be obliged to—what? oh yes: see to it that *p*, intend that, if *p*, then *q*, and so on. However, if we undertake to reflect on thought, on its self-consciousness and its objectivity, then the letter *p* signifies the deepest question and the deepest comprehension. If only we understood the letter *p*, the whole would open up to us.



Natural languages provide a variety of expressions that serve the purpose to which philosophers put the letter *p*. In English, the object of judgment is what is, what is the case, the facts, the world, the objective world, reality, etc.<sup>3</sup> I shall most often use the term *what is*: I judge that things are so, I judge that it is so; so it is, I say.<sup>4</sup> Reflecting on this concept, the first thing we note is that the concept of what is, the concept of a fact, the concept of something real, does not signify a part, an aspect, a limited region of—of what? yes: of—what is, the facts, reality. The concept of what is—let this evoke the many words that philosophy and ordinary language supply to designate this concept—is not a concept of anything limited. It is not a concept of an element, distinct from other elements, of a whole comprising them. It is not contained in anything larger than it. The concept of what is has always already transcended any boundary. Therefore the object of judgment cannot be placed alongside another object, the object of animal consciousness, say. The object of judgment is the object *sans phrase*; it is *the* object, the object *überhaupt*.

The object of judgment is illimitable, we find. We are not reduced to finding it so. We understand why the object of judgment is illimitable: it is illimitable because judgment is objective. Let us suppose the object of someone's judgment—let her be Sylvia—is limited: only a part of reality falls within the purview of her judgment. This will be so on account of the nature of her judgment: that nature determines its object in such a way as to exclude certain regions of what is from what is available to it. This means that Sylvian judgment is a given nature; it is a given character of Sylvia: the nature of Sylvia's judgment circumscribes a limited object, a region of reality. Reality as such, in its turn, is indifferent to the nature of her power; it does not circumscribe the latter's object. It follows that it is not the case that the validity of Sylvia's judgment depends on what she judges alone and on no given character of her who judges it. For, a valid judgment is as it should be, being what it is. And Sylvia's judgment is Sylvian judgment; this is what it is. Its validity resides in its conformity to its nature, which is a given character of Sylvia. The office of a judgment of Sylvia's can only be to conform to its nature as Sylvian judgment, and since we have laid it down that this is not the same as the nature of reality as such, it makes no sense to de-

scribe Sylvian judgment as engaged to conform to reality. The idea is widespread that we can imagine powers that are a given nature of the subjects who possess them and yet are powers to represent reality, how things are, the world. However, the conjunction of the idea of a natural power with the idea of knowledge yields gibberish.

It has been said about *our* power of knowledge that it is constituted in such a way as to be able to know certain things and not others. For example, it has been claimed that it is so constituted as to be unable to comprehend itself. This assertion dissolves itself because it entails that judgment is not objective. The notion that our power of knowledge may be limited in the sense of being confined to a certain region of what is to the exclusion of what lies outside this region is typically conjoined with the idea that there is an organ of this power: the brain. This makes sense, for the determinate nature of an organ cannot fail to limit the object apprehended by a power whose organ it is. It follows that the brain is not the organ of thought in the manner in which the eye is the organ of sight; there is no such thing as an organ of thought in the sense in which there are organs of sense. There is not because thought is objective and its object illimitable.<sup>5</sup>

The concept of the object of judgment does not signify anything limited. It does not because judgment is objective. We can equally say, it does not because judgment is self-conscious. As judgment is self-conscious, the concept of judgment is at work in every judgment. Hence the concept of judgment does not signify anything that is as it is independently of being thought through this concept. The concept of judgment does not derive from a given reality that is there independently, in order then to be comprehended in this concept. Rather, as judgment is for itself its own concept, the nature of judgment—if we call it a nature despite the fact that it is nothing given—is nothing other than the concept of this nature. Therefore, if this nature were to delimit the object of judgment, this limit would be nothing other than the concept of this limit; as judgment is self-conscious, the object of judgment can be limited only in and through the thought of this limitation. But the thought of a limit is not subject to the limit that it thinks. On the contrary. The thought of a limit transcends this very limit. Hence, as a limit of the object of judgment is the thought of this limit, the object of judgment is illimitable.<sup>6</sup>

The object of judgment is illimitable. As judgment is self-conscious, its illimitability is comprehended *in* judgment. As I think myself judging in judging, the object of judgment is apprehended in judgment through the concept of the object of judgment. Judgment represents its object through the formal concept of its object. Indeed, an object of judgment can be apprehended only through this concept, the concept of an object of judgment. Hence, being conscious of something that is, being conscious of a fact, is being conscious of it as something that is; it is being conscious of it as a fact. As this is a formal character of the object of judgment, we can put it in this way: a fact, something that is, something real, refers itself to an illimitable whole: the facts, being, reality. As judgment is self-conscious, its object is always and everywhere *the* object, the object *überhaupt*. *That* is the first and original object of judgment.<sup>7</sup>

We noted that the self-consciousness of judgment pervades the consciousness of the subject of judgment. Specifically it pervades her experience. A subject of judgment, in sensory experience, relates to the object of judgment: she relates, in her sensory consciousness, to the world, what is, the facts. Since apprehension of a fact is apprehension of it *as a fact*, this is to say that the subject of judgment is, in experience, conscious of the facts as facts, of the world as the world. By means of her senses, she apprehends what is; in her experience, the world is opened up to her. This describes the subject of judgment. It does not describe the animal.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4.3. The science *überhaupt*

Judgment is objective; equivalently, it is self-conscious. Therefore its object is the object *überhaupt*. This defines the science of judgment, for the science of judgment is the science of the object of judgment. The science of judgment, the science *überhaupt*, is the science without contrary. For it is the articulation of the *I think*, of the self-consciousness of judgment. And what is contained in the self-consciousness of judgment anyone always already knows, knows in any judgment; there is no judging counter to what is known in any judgment.

Elaborating our definition of objectivity—thought is objective as its validity depends on no character of the subject thinking it, but on what she thinks alone—we proposed to call *given* a character of the subject that one does not know her to possess in judging that which she judges. We see why it is proper to call such a character *given*. A character of the subject of a judgment that is such that knowing her to exhibit it requires nothing more than judging what she herself judges is a character that is thought, by this subject, in the first person. It is a character known in self-consciousness. And what is contained in the self-consciousness of judgment, in the *I think*, is not a given reality in the sense that it is nothing that is, and is as it is, independently of my knowing it. The subject of thought, in her first-person thought, or in self-consciousness, comprehends herself to be nothing given at all. It may be held that therefore the self-consciousness of judgment is empty, an empty form, perhaps. But one will hold this only if one has laid it down in advance that a content of thought can only come from a given reality: from a reality that is as it is independently of being thought. If one does not lay this down, then one can be open to the possibility that the self-consciousness of judgment is knowledge. If it is, then there is a science of what is known in self-consciousness: the science without contrary. *It* is not of a given reality.

The science of judgment has no contrary. This may seem absurd. Judgment is a psychic endowment of a certain species, *Homo sapiens*. Perhaps it is found in other species, too, perhaps in less developed guises. In any case, it is a power, perhaps more advanced and more complicated, but no different in principle from the various forms of cognition enjoyed by the manifold species of animals. It has a determinate nature, which has been molded by evolutionary forces acting on our forebears. Accordingly the study of judgment falls within the province of the sciences that investigate the relevant species in general and specifically their cognitive powers: biology, psychology, cognitive science. These sciences propose hypotheses, which are borne out or not. They formulate theories, whose very point it is that they may prove false. Clearly the science of judgment is not without contrary.

We might try responding by distinguishing two perspectives on judgment, two standpoints from which we may think about it: the

first-person perspective of the one who judges and the third-person perspective of the one who observes someone else judging.<sup>9</sup> From the first-person perspective, we articulate what we understand judgment to be in judging. From the third-person perspective, we study judgment as an observable capacity of a certain animal species. Judgment can be made the object of an empirical science, namely, when it is approached from the third-person standpoint. But we must grant the possibility of thinking about judgment from the first-person standpoint.

This is misguided because the science without contrary cannot be assigned to a standpoint. It is its defining character not to mark out a standpoint. Nor is the self-consciousness of judgment a perspective on judgment. The idea of differing perspectives on the same requires that that on which those perspectives are perspectives is independent of each of them. But the comprehension of judgment that is at work in judgment is not an understanding of something that is as it is independently of this understanding of it; judgment is, is only, through the understanding of itself. The self-consciousness of judgment is not a *perspective on judgment*. *It is judgment*.

The power of judgment is not a given reality; it is no object of an empirical science. Not only is this not absurd. It is obvious. It is obvious that there is no such thing as a natural science of judgment, just as there is no such thing as a natural science of natural science. There is not, because judgment, science, is objective. Judgment is objective as its validity depends on what is judged alone. If judgment had a given nature, then its validity would reside in its conformity to this nature, and conformity to this nature could not be equated with agreement with what is. And then there would be no science of judgment because there would be no science. Since the object of judgment is *the* object, the object *überhaupt*, the power of judgment is *the* power, the power *überhaupt*.

#### 4.4. The concept *überhaupt*

Equivalently, the concept of judgment is *the* concept, the concept *überhaupt*. As I am conscious of judging in judging, the concept of judgment is at work in judgment as such. That is to say, it is contained *in any con-*

*cept*. It is not *a* concept, to be placed alongside other concepts. It is *the* concept.

Suppose the concept of judgment is a concept alongside other concepts. Then thought does not as such deploy this concept. Thought of a limited area of what is does so: thought of certain mental states of certain creatures. As judging is not as such thinking judgment, I may judge well enough without possessing the concept of judgment. Only as I—should I—turn to the designated area of reality do I need to use this concept.

As I may have this concept, or not, there must be such a thing as acquiring it. How do I acquire it? The concept of judgment includes the concept of the object of judgment: possessing the concept of judgment, I know at a minimum that it is right to judge that things are so if and only if indeed they are. The concept of things' being as they are figures in what I know, knowing what it is to judge. But there is no such thing as acquiring *this* concept, the concept of things' being as they are. As the concept of what is does not signify anything limited, there is nothing, nothing in particular, from which I could acquire it. I may acquire the concept of a polar bear as I encounter a polar bear. There is nothing I may encounter encountering which will equip me with the idea of it as real, or a fact. If I lack this idea, nothing—nothing real, no fact—can give it to me. The concept of things' being as they are is possible only as it is at work—not in thinking this or that, but—in thinking anything at all. The concept of being, reality, the facts, is possible only as contained in the *I think*. Since judgment is objective, the concept of judgment cannot be added to a given stock of concepts. It is not *a* concept, but *the* concept; as judgment is objective, its concept is self-consciousness.

As thinking something is thinking oneself thinking it, there is no such thing as thinking *I think p* in addition to thinking *p*. The *I think* pervades *p*; a perspicuous notation would form the letter *p* by the words *I think*. Therefore articulating the *I think* is comprehending the object of judgment. Speaking about judgment and its nature, we do not turn away from the object. We do not turn to the mind, the self, the subject, not if these words are to signify something that is separate from, and to be contrasted with, the object, reality, the world. On the contrary.

Everything we understand judgment to be, as such, defines the object of judgment—*the* object, that is.

The concept of judgment does not signify a limited reality. Judgment is not an element of what is, reality, the world, alongside other elements. For, judgment is objective. This does not mean that there is no science of judgment. It means that the science of judgment is the science without contrary, the science of self-consciousness, or, simply, self-consciousness. That science is the proprietor of all concepts that belong to the idea of objectivity: judgment, being, appearance; *the* object, *the* power, *the* concept. All these concepts are contained in the *I think*. Hence they are in *any* concept. All these concepts are *the concept*. It is in virtue of thinking these concepts—it is in virtue of thinking *the* concept—that we think objectively.

## Chapter Five

# Objective Judgment in Nagel and Moore

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### 5.1. Epistemology as the self-comprehension of judgment

Current epistemology defines its topic by the formula “S knows that *p*” as opposed to the question “What can I know?”. The significance of this difference is twofold. First, the formula “S knows that *p*” suggests that the primary object of knowledge is a particular proposition. However, the object of judgment, and hence of knowledge, is *the* object: the world, what is, reality. Answers to the traditional question are not, “snow is white”, but, for example, “appearances”, “nature”, “the external world”, “God”. These terms express a conception of the object of judgment, or *the* object, a conception that is internal to judgment as such. Secondly, in replacing the first-person pronoun by a name, the contemporary formula does not exclude in virtue of its form accounts of what it is to know that fail to settle that she who knows something understands herself to know it. An account that fails to settle this is no account of knowledge. As judgment *is* the thought of itself as valid, it can be valid only in such a way as to be itself the recognition of its validity.



Adrian Moore and Thomas Nagel, in *Points of View* and *The View from Nowhere* respectively, depart from the main current of epistemology in these two respects: they seek to understand how judgment can be of *reality*, thus relating judgment to its true object, and how it can be of reality in such a way as to comprehend itself to be that, thus appreciating the self-consciousness of judgment. Yet they hold fast to the notion that the objectivity of judgment resides in its being of something other than itself. We can think of their reflections as reducing this notion to absurdity. For it leads them to resign judgment to being a dream, or a regulative ideal, of itself. This dissolves judgment from within.

## 5.2. Two concepts contained in a judgment's claim to validity

Nagel and Moore undertake to articulate the claim to validity that a judgment as such raises for itself.<sup>1</sup> The first thing that comes to light as they do so is the concept of the object of judgment. In judging, I comprehend myself to be subject to a measure that owes nothing to how things stand with me, the subject who judges, but is provided by what I judge, the object of my judgment, alone. As I comprehend this *in* judging, my judgment contains the thought of this measure and its agreement with it. Various words may be used to designate this measure; Moore and Nagel use “reality”: in judging, I think there is something, reality, to which my judgment is answerable; the claim I raise for my judgment is that reality makes it true. In this way, a judgment represents what it does through the concept of reality.

It may be said that “My judgment that things are so is made true by reality” is nothing but a way of expressing the judgment that things are so. Perhaps this way of expressing a judgment has a certain utility.<sup>2</sup> But it does not articulate a conception of the kind of validity we seek in judgment, a fortiori not a conception of this validity as objective. We may bring this objection to a head by asking what it is that we think when we think “reality”. What is the content of this purported concept? As reality is what makes our true judgments true, we determine what reality is in judging what we do. The concept of reality has no more and

no less content than the sum of judgments we take to be true. Then it is a tautology when we say, of what we take to be true, that it is part of reality. In response, we may try saying that reality is what we aim to represent in our judgments, which, however, is what it is independently of what we think it to be. Hence, reality cannot be equated with any conception of it that we may form in judging what we do. Now, again, the concept is empty. It is defined in such a way as to lie beyond our consciousness and therefore cannot impinge on our conscious existence in any way. It is nothing for us.

Moore and Nagel hold that the concept of reality is not empty. It has substance. It is neither the sum of our judgments, nor simply beyond judgment. Rather, it informs our endeavor to gain knowledge. In this, we are guided by an idea of satisfaction: the idea of a conception of reality in which we recognize our aim to represent reality to be fulfilled.<sup>3</sup> As they seek to describe this idea, Moore and Nagel both frame the idea of a limit: in Moore, it is a judgment that is its own “fully self-conscious endorsement”, in Nagel, it is a judgment that “closes over itself”. This, respectively, is the second concept that emerges as Nagel and Moore undertake to articulate the claim of judgment to objectivity. In this second concept, the first one, the concept of reality, is to have substance.

### 5.3. Points of view, transcendence

According to Nagel and Moore, the inner aim of judgment to be true of reality gives rise to a progression in which we shed subjectivity and approach objectivity. For, most if not all our judgments, they think, are from “a point of view”; in order to judge objectively, we must transcend the point of view from which we judge. In presenting what this is to mean, I follow Moore, in order then to mention a consideration that is central to Nagel’s exposition, but not highlighted by Moore.

A point of view contributes to determining the conditions of the validity of judgments from this point of view; yet it is not represented in these judgments.<sup>4</sup> In the terms of the present essay, it is a given character of the subject. Moore gives these examples. Suppose I say, “It is noon”. Whether I am right to say what I do depends on when I say it. However, in saying what I do, I do not identify this time, distinguishing

it from other times. Or I say, "Grass is green". Whether it is correct to say this depends on the character of my visual system. Yet what I say does not describe my visual system, distinguishing it from other possible or actual visual systems. Or I say, "This is base". Whether it is correct to say this depends on the values of the culture within which I say it. However, what I say does not represent this culture, distinguishing it from other cultures.<sup>5</sup>

In these cases, the validity of my judgment depends on something that characterizes me as the subject of the judgment: the time when I judge, the visual system whose deliverances my judgment expresses, the values that inform my judgment. While I say, it is noon, grass is green, and this is base, the true import of what I say is this: *given me*—my time, my visual system, my values—this is how things are: it is noon, grass is green, this is base. The first-person pronoun indicates this subjectivity of the judgment: the dependence of its validity on a given character of the subject. Indeed, we can think of judgments from a point of view as first-person judgments. "Grass is green" is a first-person judgment in this broad sense. We could signify its dependence on my visual system by introducing a subscript, "Grass is green<sub>1</sub>", or by using a special font, *Grass is green*.<sup>6</sup> Then judgment is objective to the extent that it has expelled the first person, and the worry that objectivity may be unattainable is the worry that the first person lurks at the bottom of all our judgments.

Even as someone judges from a point of view, she thinks of her judgment as made true by reality. However, judging *from* a point of view, she does not represent everything on which the validity of her judgment depends. She does not fully represent the reality in virtue of which her judgment is true. (If it is. We are disregarding false judgments.). As she nevertheless takes her judgment to be true to reality, she entertains, in her judgment from a point of view, the idea of an account that would *show how* her judgment is made true by reality.<sup>7</sup> A part of this account would fully represent the reality that makes her original judgment true. So it must identify the point of view of that judgment. Hence, the relevant part of the account (the one that fully represents the reality that makes the original judgment true) is no longer from the point of view of the original judgment. What was a given character of the subject, a character not represented in her judgment,

no longer is a *given* character. It has been brought inside what is judged. The new judgment has transcended the point of view of the original one.

If the account is to reveal  $\rho_1$  [a given representation from a given point of view, SR] as a representation made true by reality, it must make explicit reference to that point of view [the point of view from which  $\rho_1$  issues, SR], showing how the point of view contributes to  $\rho_1$ 's having the content it has. (*Points of View*, p. 70)

The first person marks a judgment as from a point of view. Being brought inside what is judged, hence being no longer the point of view from which the judgment issues, a point of view is no longer thought in the first person. Transcendence expels the first person. For example, a given time may be the time of my judgment. When my judgment no longer is from that time, it no longer represents what still may be its time *as its time*. It may represent it by a number, which specifies a date. What, in a judgment from a point of view, is thought in the first person is represented in the judgment that transcends that point of view as something that is as it is anyway.<sup>8</sup>

As we transcend the point of view from which we judge, we comprehend this point of view within what we now judge. However, if the transcending judgment brings into view the point of view of the original judgment only from a point of view, then it does *not* show how the latter is made true by reality. For, it does not fully represent the reality in virtue of which it, the transcending judgment, is true. In consequence, it does not fully represent the reality that makes the transcended judgment true. One may want to say that, while the transcending judgment is not fully objective—it still is from a point of view—it is more objective than the judgment it transcends. For it is at least not from the point of view of the latter. This is fine. However, without the idea of a judgment that fully represents the reality that makes a given judgment true, there is no idea of a diminishing distance from such a judgment. The idea of a progression toward objectivity, of one judgment's being more objective than another, depends on the idea of a judgment in which this

progression comes to a close. This is a judgment that transcends any point of view. It is from *no* point of view. Equivalently, it is a judgment that has left behind the first person completely. It is the *objective judgment*. This idea, the idea of an objective judgment, gives substance to the concept of reality.

She who judges thinks of her judgment as made true by reality. The substance of this thought resides in the idea of a judgment that fully represents the reality that makes her judgment true: an objective judgment. If the original judgment is from a point of view, then the judgment that fully represents the reality that makes that judgment true transcends it. An objective judgment, being from no point of view, does not require—indeed, it leaves no room for—transcendence. When we ask what reality it is in virtue of which an objective judgment is true, the answer will be given in nothing other than this very judgment. An objective judgment fully represents, in what it judges, the reality that makes it, that objective judgment, true. Moore calls a judgment that fully represents what makes a given judgment true the “fully self-conscious endorsement” of that judgment. The fully self-conscious endorsement of any judgment is an objective judgment. An objective judgment is *its own* fully self-conscious endorsement.<sup>9</sup>

The first way [of explaining what it is for a representation to be from no point of view, SR] is to focus on a particular kind of endorsement, that which is fully self-conscious. . . . Self-consciousness is what enables me to see my own representations *as* my own representations. It is what I need if I am not only to know something but to know that I know it. In the case of an absolute representation [a representation from no point of view, SR], fully self-conscious endorsement can be achieved by simple repetition. In the case of a perspectival representation [a representation from a point of view, SR], on the other hand, full self-consciousness demands more. It demands reference to the relevant point of view. (*Points of View*, p. 13)

In all of this, Moore is in agreement with Nagel. But there is a thought not prominent in Moore that Nagel emphasizes: the desire to see how a

judgment from a point of view is made true by reality is a desire to understand why things are represented as they are in the transcended judgment.<sup>10</sup> (In the transcended judgment, they are represented differently from the way in which they are represented in the transcending judgment.) Exploiting the literal meaning of the metaphor *point of view*, Nagel speaks of the way things appear from a point of view and of what is represented from a point of view as an appearance. As I look at something from a point of view, it appears in a way that reflects not only how it is in itself, but also the point of view from which I look at it. Metaphorically extending the idea of a point of view, we can say that the point of view from which I judge informs how things appear to me in this judgment. According to Nagel, then, transcending a point of view involves understanding why things appear as they do from that point of view.

An explanation why reality appears at it does in a judgment from a point of view transcends that point of view. The limit of transcendence is a judgment from no point of view. It can explain why things appear as they do from an arbitrary point of view. And when we ask why it is that things appear as they do in *this* judgment, the answer cannot invoke a point of view from which they so appear. The answer can only be that things appear as they do in this judgment *because this is how they are*. An objective judgment provides, in what it judges, what is needed to understand why things are judged to be as they are in this judgment. The objective judgment “closes over itself”.

The limit to which such development must tend [a development of the objective standpoint] is . . . a conception that closes over itself completely, by describing a world that contains a being that has precisely that conception, and explaining how the being was able to reach that conception. (*The View from Nowhere*, p. 74)

#### 5.4. Nagel, the self-comprehending natural science

Moore and Nagel think that knowledge is of something that is as it is independently of being known to be so. With disarming honesty, Moore

calls this his “basic assumption”.<sup>11</sup> If we follow tradition and call *nature* what is other than and independent of the knowledge of it, then knowledge, as such, is of nature; where it rises to the form of episteme, it is natural science. In this way, Nagel and Moore lay it down that an objective judgment, were we to reach it, would be a natural scientific theory. But a natural science does *not* close over itself. A judgment that closes over itself is *not* of something that is as it is anyway. What is judged in it contains its being judged *in this very judgment*. For, judging what is judged in this judgment is understanding why it is being judged, and thus judging what is judged in this judgment is knowing it to be judged. This is occluded in Nagel.

A natural scientific theory is a set of principles or laws; it explains something in the sense that one can explain it by applying the theory to it. A theory that explains itself then is such that one can explain why someone affirms it by applying the principles of the theory to her who holds it. And as explaining something involves endorsing the theory one applies in explaining it, there is, among the things the theory explains, the act of affirming the theory that is involved in the act of explaining things by this theory.

A science is of something that is as it is independently of being known to be so in this science. In particular, what according to a science explains something explains it independently of being known to explain it. It follows that I do not, *in* explaining a given act of endorsing the scientific theory, recognize what I explain to be the very act that forms part of my explaining it. If I did, my knowing what explains the act would be internal to what I explain; what explains my act of endorsing the theory would not explain it anyway, whether I so explain it or not. Hence, as I apply the theory to myself and explain my affirmation of it, I do not think of her to whom I apply it as me, and the act of affirming the theory that I explain does not figure, in my explanation of it, as mine. My explanation of my affirming the theory by means of that theory is not—not originally—a first-person thought. Of course not. A science provides objective knowledge, which is free of the first person. Nagel makes this explicit.

... a self-transcendent conception should ideally explain four things: (1) what the world is like; (2) what we are like; (3) why

the world appears to beings like us in certain respects as it is and in certain respects as it isn't; (4) how beings like us can arrive at such a conception. . . . In a sense, these conditions could also be satisfied by a conception of the world and our place in it that was developed by other beings, different from us; but in that case the fourth element would not involve self-referential understanding, as it does in the understanding of ourselves. (*The View from Nowhere*, p. 74)

Applying the theory to someone, I explain why she holds that theory. It is external to what I thus understand that she whose endorsement I explain is she who so explains it. The comprehension the theory provides is not *self*-comprehension, not originally. It is comprehension of myself as other.<sup>12</sup> If I am to realize that it is my own affirmation of the theory that I explain—the affirmation involved in my explaining the relevant act of affirming the theory—I must pass a further judgment: I must recognize that the act I explain is the same as the one involved in my explaining it. This recognition is a different act of the mind from my explanation of the relevant act of affirming the theory.

This makes no sense. Let it be that I do not think in the first person of the one whose act of affirming the theory I explain. Suppose I think of him as Siggi. I am to recognize that my act of endorsing the theory, the one involved in my explaining Siggi's endorsement, is the same as Siggi's act of endorsing the theory, the one I explain. This recognition is to be a separate act from this judgment—from my judgment, from Siggi's judgment: these are one judgment. However, a judgment is nothing other than the first-person thought of itself. I bring a judgment to myself *in* judging what I do; my judgment *is* the thought of itself as mine. Conversely, my thought of a judgment *as mine* is *that judgment*. Hence there is no such thing as we are supposed to imagine: there is a judgment I apprehend (Siggi's), which, in a separate act from this judgment, I recognize to be mine. As there is no recognizing a judgment to be mine in a second step, in an act distinct from that judgment, there is no meaning to the notion of a science that explains *my* judgment.

Nagel pretends to contemplate the idea of a natural scientific theory that explains our affirmation of this very theory: the theory is such that,



by applying its principles to given subjects, one can explain their acts of affirming this theory. But there is no explaining *my* judgment by applying a scientific theory to myself. There is no seeing my own affirmation of a scientific theory as explained by this theory. It is not that I will never reach such a theory. There is nothing there of which to think it is beyond me. A judgment that explains itself explains itself *as itself*. It is a first-person thought.<sup>13</sup>

### 5.5. Excursus: natural science and human self-comprehension

This provides an occasion for an excursus into the significance natural science may have for our self-comprehension. It is often said that our self-understanding is furthered, even revolutionized, by the recent progress of empirical sciences treating of the human mind: branches of biology, psychology, and neuroscience.<sup>14</sup> The ultimate science—the science that explains why we endorse it, that very science—may be thought to be the perfection of the science of the human mind, integrating the disciplines mentioned. So imagine I endorse this ultimate theory, a theory treating of human beings. If the theory is to provide self-comprehension, I must apply it to myself. That seems easy. I am a human being, am I not? I know that I am a human being, do I not? However, if the concept of a human being is not originally thought in the first person, then there is no such thing as comprehending myself, in the first person, through a theory treating of human beings. For I know that I am a human being only if what I know myself to be—what I know myself to be in first-person thought—provides sufficient grounds for judging that I am a human being. And nothing short of my knowledge that I am a human being provides such grounds.

It follows that there is a science—episteme, Wissenschaft—that reigns supreme over any empirical inquiry into what it is to be a human being, a science in which any such inquiry must ground itself. That is the science that articulates *what I know myself to be*. It is the self-science, its knowledge is self-knowledge, and it is nothing other than what it knows. This science is philosophy.

There are many things we can learn about ourselves through empirical inquiry. There are even things we can learn about judgment through empirical inquiry. What we cannot learn from empirical inquiry is what it is to judge, what it is to know, what it is to act from knowledge. That is, we cannot learn from such inquiry what it is to be a human being and to live a human life. The endeavor to think through these questions—which is the endeavor to live, to be, through understanding—is philosophy.

It has become common to proclaim that philosophy—the self-science—should take its bearing from the results of the empirical study of the human psyche and its powers of cognition. This is to reverse the order of understanding. To implement this proposal is to ensure that empirical inquiry shall never have the least relevance to our self-understanding. It is to fix it that an unbridgeable gulf separates our efforts to comprehend who we are, to know ourselves, from any natural science. The first step in the attempt to constitute a natural science that investigates human consciousness is to recognize its subordination to our *self*-comprehension, and that is, as self-comprehension takes the form of episteme, to philosophy.

### 5.6. Nagel's dream

There is no such thing as a natural science that closes over itself: there is no explaining my affirmation of the principles of a natural science by an application of these very principles. Yet *this* is the aim of judgment: a judgment that, in what it judges, provides for the comprehension of itself as conforming to reality. This idea of such a judgment, Nagel writes, is “a dream”.

The idea of a full conception of reality that explains our ability to arrive at it is just a dream. Nevertheless, it's what we aim toward. (*The View from Nowhere*, p. 85)

Here is the train of thought that terminates in this conclusion. I know what I do know, it seems, by interacting with the object of my knowledge.

The result of this interaction—my putative knowledge—reflects as much the character of me, the knowing subject, as it does the character of the object known. This character of me—a given character—constitutes the point of view from which I judge. I may transcend this point of view and include it within what I judge. However, as long as the judgment I reach in this way continues to be the result of interaction with the object, it will in turn be from a point of view.<sup>15</sup> If I am to progress toward objectivity, I must draw on knowledge that does not spring from interaction. Objective knowledge is possible only to the extent that it can ground itself in rational knowledge, knowledge “drawn from within ourselves”.<sup>16</sup>

This is puzzling. Empirical knowledge, arising from interaction, is unable to be fully objective because it reflects not only the character of the object to be known but equally the character of the subject seeking to know it. How can turning to something “drawn from within ourselves” remedy this deficiency? Knowledge from transaction—empirical knowledge—at least owes *something* to the character of the object to be known. Rational knowledge, by contrast, appears to owe *everything* to the character of the subject seeking knowledge. It makes sense to turn to rational knowledge only if the principle of rational knowledge is nothing other than the universal nature of *the* object. That within us from which rational knowledge springs must be nothing other and nothing less than the principle of all reality. Then turning to what is within us is turning to what reality is in itself. Here the idea of an opposition of self-knowledge and objectivity comes to grief. For now we think that knowledge is objective only if, and only insofar as, it is self-knowledge.

Nagel’s lack of clarity regarding this dialectic is reflected in his attempt to find a surrogate of God in nature. He is led to this as he holds fast to the notion that knowledge is of something that is as it is independently of being known to be so. As this defines knowledge in general, it defines rational knowledge. Then what we ostensibly know through reason does not through itself explain how our ostensible knowledge conforms to what is, the world. We need something by appeal to which we can explain to ourselves why notions we draw from within ourselves disclose what is. Rational knowledge does not pro-

vide this explanation any more than knowledge from interaction does so.<sup>17</sup> Nagel reports that Descartes thought God secured the non-accidental agreement of reason and the world. And he contends that we need something to play the part of God: we must “believe something—we know not what—is true that plays the role in our relation to the world that Descartes thought was played by God.” He goes on: “I have no idea what unheard-of property of the natural order this might be” (*The View from Nowhere*, p. 85). While Nagel does not know what it is, he takes himself to know that it is a property of the natural order. It is clear why he should think this. Something can play the relevant role only if we know it, and Nagel has laid it down that knowledge is of something other than the knowledge of it. If we call that the natural order, then what plays the role of God must be a property of the natural order. However, by fixing it that what plays the role of God bears the described relation to our knowledge of it, Nagel fixes it that it cannot play the role of God. For any presumed knowledge of it will suffer from the very lack of self-comprehension that it is to supply.

Nagel thinks Descartes’s invocation of God is no solution. This may be right, but in contrast to Nagel’s appeal to an unknown property of the natural order, it is not obviously pointless. For God is not simply other than our knowledge of Him. It is through God and God alone that we know God. Descartes elaborates this in this way: we know God because he left a mark of Himself in us; this mark is nothing other than our self-consciousness.<sup>18</sup> Knowing God through this mark of His, we know God in every act of reason.

A property of nature that is to serve as a surrogate of God in our conception of ourselves as subjects of knowledge will have to be like God at least in this respect: it is the original unity of thought and being. A property of the natural order that is that is wonderful indeed. Nagel wonders what property of the natural order will save us. This idea of salvation is less than a dream.<sup>19</sup>

### 5.7. Moore, the account that shows how a judgment is made true by reality

In judging, we think our judgment valid. As Moore puts this, we think of our judgment as made true by reality. Thus we frame the idea of an account in which we would understand our judgment to be made true by reality and thus comprehend ourselves to know. Nagel finds that that is a dream. Moore reaches the same result, on a different route. In his reflections, too, the idea of comprehending oneself to know disintegrates.

As I think of my judgment as made true by reality, I think it possible that there be an account that shows how it is made true by reality. The account bears this form: "The judgment *A* is made true by the fact that *B*." One may think that this account, in the limit, will be from no point of view and an element of an objective conception of reality. However, Moore makes it clear that this is not so. We must distinguish the account as a whole from the part of it that represents the reality that, according to the account, makes the judgment true. In our schema this is the judgment *B*. Ultimately, *this* judgment will be objective; in a step toward objectivity, it will be more objective than the judgment that is the object of the account. In judging *B*, I supersede the point of view from which I judge, judging *A*. As I comprehend the point of view from which I judge, judging *A*, within what I judge, judging *B*, I understand, in the account, how my judgment *A* is made true by reality in a manner in which I do not comprehend it in the judgment *A* itself.

Moore holds that an account that shows how a given judgment is made true by reality, as such, is from a point of view. Its distinguished part (the one that represents the reality that makes the judgment in question true), when considered as a self-standing judgment and outside the context of the account, may be from no point of view. But the account is not. His reason for thinking this is that he believes that the very concept of judgment can be deployed only from a point of view. Hence, any judgment that reflects on a judgment and its truth is from a point of view.<sup>20</sup> We set this aside. For, when we heed Moore's distinction of part and whole, we notice a more unsettling manner in which an account that shows how a given judgment is made true by reality is

from a point of view. While its distinguished part may transcend the point of view of the judgment that is its object, the account as a whole is *from the very point of view of that judgment*. This is so because the account must relate the fact that makes the judgment true to that judgment, and to that judgment conceived as judging what it does. And it judges what it does from its point of view.<sup>21</sup> We can make this concrete by considering the examples by which Moore introduces the idea of judgment from a point of view.

Suppose I judge it is warm. I want to understand how reality makes this judgment true. It does so as it is warm at a certain time and a certain place. The judgment that it is warm at *t* and *l* is not from the point of view from which I judge that it is warm; it transcends that point of view. For it comprehends that point of view in what it judges: the time and place of my judgment. Now, in order to understand how this fact makes my judgment that it is warm true, I need to relate what I judge in this judgment to that fact. I do so as I recognize that I am at *l* and that now is *t*. So the account shows how reality makes my judgment true by saying the following: given that I am at *l* and that now is *t*, my judgment that it is warm is made true by the fact that it is warm at *t* and *l*. *This claim is a judgment from the very point of view from which I judge that it is warm.*

The account was to advance my comprehension of my judgment's agreement with reality. However, as it is from the same point of view as that judgment, it does not do this. If, on account of being from a point of view, a judgment is lacking in the comprehension it provides of how it is made true by reality, then the account does not supply this lack. For it is from that very same point of view. I may be interested in the claim we have been calling an account of how my judgment is made true by reality; but that interest cannot be an interest in seeing how my judgment is made true by reality. For in this respect, the account does no better than the account my judgment provides for itself: what makes my judgment that it is warm true is the fact that it is warm.

One may object that the account differs from that trivial one in that it has *a part* that more fully represents the reality that makes the judgment true. This part transcends the point of view of the original judgment. However, the above line of thought reveals that this description of the

part is baseless. If I do not, in the account, advance my understanding of my judgment as made true by reality, then there is no ground for saying that a part of this account represents the reality that makes my judgment true in a way that supplies a lack in the manner in which the original judgment does that. Thinking of my location and the present time as  $l$  and  $t$  is not transcending the here and now of my judgment. Rather, it allows me to know more about here and now, namely, on the basis of what I know about  $t$  and  $l$ .

It is worth our while to consider a second example. Suppose I judge grass is green. And suppose this judgment is from a point of view, and a judgment that transcends this point of view states that grass usually differentially reflects light of a certain wavelength. An account in which I recognize that that fact makes my judgment true includes my recognition that green things reflect light of a certain wavelength. *This* judgment is from the same point of view as the original one. So again, this alleged account provides no comprehension of how the original judgment is made true by reality that advances over the comprehension which that judgment itself provides. And again, this shows that there is no call to think of judgments about wavelengths as representing what makes my color-judgments true more fully than those judgments themselves do. In turning to wavelengths I do not transcend my sense of sight and its proper objects, colors; I enlarge my knowledge of the objects of sight, as I find that what is green tends to reflect light of a certain wavelength.

Perhaps we can evade the consequence by putting the account differently. We do not say: as I am at  $l$  and now is  $t$ , my judgment that it is warm is made true by the fact that it is warm at  $t$  and  $l$ ; rather, we say, the judgment "It is warm" made at  $t$  and  $l$  is made true by the fact that it is warm at  $t$  and  $l$ . *This* claim is not from the point of view of the judgment of whose truth it is the account. It shows how the judgment is made true by reality without being from its point of view.

The rephrasing brings out the flaw in the idea of transcendence even more brightly. The account is to show how my judgment is made true by reality, without being from its point of view. However, as long it is not from the point of view of my judgment, I have no notion of it as concerning my judgment. The account can show *me* how *my* judgment

is made true by reality only by relating *l* and *t* to me and my judging, therewith descending to the point of view of my judgment. In giving that account of my judgment, I supersede the point of view of my judgment, but only as long as I do not realize that I do so. I understand how the content of my judgment depends on the point of view from which I judge, and this understanding is not from this point of view, but only as long as I do not recognize that this is what I understand. The moment I see that the content of my judgment depends on my point of view in the way the account describes, I am dragged down to that point of view. But the source of any interest in Moore's accounts and their finer parts can only be this: that I want to understand how my judgment is made true by reality.

### 5.8. Moore's ideal of self-consciousness

The account through which I am to comprehend how my judgment is made true by reality provides no such comprehension, none that advances over the judgment itself, not if it is an account in which I understand how *my* judgment is made true by reality. This shows that the idea of the limit of the alleged progression to objectivity makes no contact with the desire to comprehend one's own judgment and its agreement with reality. In fact, the idea of objectivity as transcendence of point of view, or expulsion of the first person, entails the impossibility of self-comprehension in judgment.

Moore explains that an objective judgment is its own self-conscious endorsement. This may have seemed to mean that an objective judgment comprehends itself to be knowledge. This is what it would mean according to our way of speaking. When we say that judgment is self-conscious, we mean that the act of judgment and the act of comprehending it to be a judgment are one act; a judgment is a comprehension of itself as a judgment. A self-conscious endorsement, then, would be an endorsement that is nothing other than the understanding of itself as an endorsement. When Moore introduces the concept of self-conscious endorsement by writing that "self-consciousness is what enables me to see my own representations *as* my own representations. It is what I need



if I am not only to know something but to know that I know it”, then this may give rise to the impression that this is what he, too, has in mind. Yet this is not how Moore uses the term “self-conscious endorsement”. Self-consciously endorsing a judgment is representing the reality that makes it true. This does not involve a thought of the judgment and what makes it true. It is not an act of reflecting on the judgment and its truth. Hence, self-consciously to endorse one’s judgment is distinct from understanding oneself to endorse it. If the judgment is objective, then the judgment itself represents the reality that makes it true; the judgment is its own self-conscious endorsement. But again, it is no comprehension of itself as that. Self-conscious endorsement does not yield self-consciousness.

Self-consciousness, Moore explains, is the “ideal of not only knowing, but knowing that we know, an ideal in which self-consciousness and knowledge are brought together” (*Points of View*, p. 188). This is a “regulative”, which is to say, an “impossible” ideal.<sup>22</sup> It is impossible in the sense that there is no such thing as reaching it. On the one hand, knowing oneself to know something must include a consciousness of the reality that makes one’s judgment true. For it is in virtue of that reality that one’s judgment is knowledge. And that consciousness is objective. On the other hand, knowing oneself to know something must include a consciousness of the one whom one knows to know it *as oneself* and a consciousness of him *as knowing* what she does. Moore contends that any consciousness of something as a judgment is from a point of view. Moreover, a consciousness of it as mine is from a point of view. “One is self-conscious as one sees *oneself* in a certain way. And if this in turn involves seeing one’s *representations* in a certain way, then . . . this introduces further perspective” (*Points of View*, p. 190). (The two italicized terms (italicized by Moore) indicate two sources of dependence on a point of view: I think from a point of view as I think about my *judgments*, and I think from a point of view as I think about *my* judgments. We mentioned the first point above in order to set it aside. Here we do so again.)

Moore concludes that it seems that, if knowledge is to be self-conscious, the consciousness of the reality that makes the judgment true must itself provide for our understanding of the judgment as made true by it. In his terms, it seems that self-conscious endorsement must

provide for self-consciousness: “the endorsement of all one’s representations, if it is to count as fully self-conscious, should, in and of itself, yield that (full) self-consciousness” (*Points of View*, p. 190). It seems we must, in order to bring self-consciousness to knowledge, or knowledge to self-consciousness, achieve self-comprehension from no point of view, objective self-comprehension. If first-person thought, as such, is not objective, this is a contradiction.

Self-conscious knowledge—the “ideal in which self-consciousness and knowledge are brought together”—is a contradiction. It is not that it is hard to achieve; the idea of it does not hold together. It is the idea of the absolute in me. Yet in the opposition of judgment from a point of view and objective judgment, it has been laid down that I and the absolute are separate. We must suspect that the fault lies neither with the absolute nor with me, but with the way in which Moore is trying to think both: it lies in thinking that self-consciousness and knowledge need to be brought together, that they are not originally together.<sup>23</sup>

## 5.9. Where do we go from here?

Self-consciousness and knowledge cannot be brought together. The idea that we should comprehend ourselves to know is a dream. This is the self-dissolution of judgment. In judging, I take my judgment to be valid; I take it to agree with reality. Hence, I can know that my judgment agrees with reality only *in* this judgment. My judgment itself, through what it judges, must provide for my comprehension of it as knowledge. In this resides the objectivity of judgment. A skeptic concludes that we can never know any of our judgments to agree with reality. Nagel’s and Moore’s result is darker: we cannot so much as think a judgment in which we would know ourselves to know. That thought falls apart. As that thought is in any judgment, judgment falls apart.

Nagel comes close to saying this. He says judgment is a mystery to itself; judgment is enveloped by an impenetrable darkness.

The objective capacity is a complete mystery. . . . So long as we do not understand it, its results will remain under a cloud. (*The View from Nowhere*, p. 78)

There is no necessity to this conclusion. The reasoning that terminates in it reduces to absurdity the idea that knowledge, as such, is of what is as it is anyway. Objective judgment is *not* free of the first person; the first person *does not* designate a given character of the subject of judgment. Rather, the first person expresses the self-consciousness of judgment, its comprehension of itself as valid and in agreement with reality. It signifies nothing given at all.

The metaphor “point of view” presents judgment as akin to an act of seeing. This suggests that the concept of a point of view—the concept of the impediment to objectivity—is the concept of sensibility. This is borne out by the examples: I am to transcend my location in space and time, and I am to transcend my conception of reality in terms of the proper sensibles (colors, for example). My spatial location and the temporality of my activity define the general form of my existence as a sensory being. And the proper objects of the senses, notably the proper object of sight, color, materially characterize my sensibility. (A further example of concern to Moore is culture. Insofar as my culture is thought to be a point of view from which I judge, as opposed to knowledge of the good, it is taken to be a matter of sensibility in its practical aspect: desire, passion, emotion.)

Nagel and Moore link point of view and the first person. And this is right: I think my sensibility in the first person originally. This does not show that sensibility stands in the way of objectivity. It shows that it is internal to the objectivity of judgment. The temporal existence, the sensibility, the culture of a subject of judgment are no impediment to the objectivity of her judgment. They are not something she must transcend in order to comprehend herself to know what she does. Outside tensed thought, no number signifies a time; no theory of human vision explains our experience of things as colored unless it uses concepts of color straight. It would be wrong to conclude that we are fettered to the point of view of our sensibility. The idea that we approach objectivity by transcending points of view makes no sense, not because we are stuck in our point of view, but because sensibility is not a limitation of objectivity. Our sensibility is not a point of view *from which* we judge; it is not a given character of us who judge. Seeking to comprehend the objectivity of thought, we need not indulge a fantasy of shedding our sen-

sibility, immaterializing ourselves to a pure subject of thought. We need to comprehend our sensibility to be internal to our judgment, internal to *its objectivity*. This is to say, we need to comprehend sensibility to be contained within the self-consciousness of judgment.<sup>24</sup> We need not transcend the first person; we need to think it.<sup>25</sup>

We shall approach this task only in its most general form: showing how empirical judgment, as empirical, is objective, and that is, showing how empirical judgment, judgment that depends on affection and is of things that are as they are independently of being known to be so, can be what it must be: comprehension of its own validity. This will involve showing how empirical knowledge is nothing other than the self-knowledge of judgment, and vice versa. We shall reach this speculative high point in the last chapter.

## Chapter Six

# The Explanation of Judgment

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### 6.1. The non-accidental validity of judgment

Moore and Nagel undertake to comprehend the objectivity of judgment while holding to the idea that objective judgment expels the first person. Then judgment is impossible and a dream. But it is not a dream. It is real. If we are to understand, *in* judging, the objective validity of our judgment, we must see how judgment is objective precisely because, knowing what is, we know ourselves to know it.

Nagel is right to think that, in order to understand my judgment to be objective, I need to understand why I judge as I do; I need to understand this in such a way as therein to understand my judgment to agree with what is. Nagel imagines that this understanding, if it were possible, would bear the form of a natural science, revealing a wonderful property of the natural order, by which nature explains our knowledge of it, nature. However, the understanding we seek is self-understanding and a first-person thought originally. It is not knowledge of something that is as it is independently of being known to be so. It is no natural science, but the science *überhaupt*, the science of self-consciousness, or self-consciousness.

As judgment is self-conscious, it cannot be conceived through the distinction of force and content. Hence objectivity is not a character of a content in contrast to an act. Judgment, the act, is objective. Therefore the explanation of judgment bears a special form. The idea of this form is contained in the thought of the validity of our judgment that we think in this very judgment. We need to describe this form of explanation, or understanding.

I frame the idea of an explanation of my judgment as I think the validity of my judgment to be no accident. We first consider how the idea of non-accidentality enters judgment, in order then to see how it informs its explanation.

In judging that things are so, I think it correct so to judge. Hence I conceive the truth of my judgment as depending on nothing other than what I judge in this very judgment. It cannot be necessary that I turn to something else, something of which I am not aware in judging what I do, in order to ascertain whether things are as I judge them to be. If this were necessary, I would, in judging, leave open whether things are as I judge them to be. I would relate to this question in a separate act of the mind, a second-order judgment about my judgment. In this second-order judgment I would apprehend—as, *ex hypothesi*, I do not in the original judgment—that on which the truth of my judgment depends. But I do not, in judging, leave open whether things are as I judge them to be.

Whether I am right to judge as I do depends alone on what I judge. It follows that, in judging, I do not think it an accident that my judgment is true. If the truth of my judgment were an accident, it would depend on a circumstance attending my judgment, a circumstance that does not constitute it as the judgment that it is, but in which it may find itself, or not. And then I would not, in judging what I do, be conscious of this circumstance. For, a judgment is the judgment it is in virtue of judging what it does. A circumstance attending my judgment, as a *circumstance*, is not part of what I judge; it is a *given* character of me who judges it.

The validity of a judgment is its conformity to its inner measure of perfection. We identified this measure with the truth. It may have seemed equally sensible to define it as knowledge. Indeed, it makes no difference. Not if, under the name “validity”, we think what a judgment must be in order to be what it thinks itself to be; not if we conceive the

validity of a valid judgment as it is comprehended *in* a judgment that is so valid. In judging, she who judges is conscious of the validity of her judgment. As she is conscious of the validity of her judgment in this very judgment, she thinks her judgment to be valid not per accidens, but in virtue of what it judges. The concept of validity applied in a judgment to this judgment is the concept of *inner validity*: taking itself to be valid, a judgment thinks itself internally valid. When we consider the validity of judgment as we think it in judging, we do not distinguish knowledge from truth.

When true judgment is distinguished from knowledge, truth is taken to depend on what is judged, the status of the judgment as knowledge, on circumstances of the act of judging it. This distinction is unsound. As a judgment is itself the thought of its validity—as its validity is inner validity—its status as knowledge depends on what it judges alone; it cannot depend on any given character of the subject. (Current epistemology, defining its topic by the formula “S knows that *p*”, suggests that an account of how it is that someone knows something should consider her who knows it in addition to what she knows. However, the question of epistemology is, “What can I know?”, which is, “What can be known?”.)

As the thought of the validity of judging that things are so is nothing other than this judgment, nothing other than what is judged in a judgment can provide for the recognition of its validity. This is the source of skepticism: skeptical arguments seek to bring out a presumed incapacity of our judgment to provide for its own comprehension, its comprehension as in agreement with what is. Unless we embrace the skeptic’s desire for a judgment that is the certainty of its validity, our conception of judgment will pass us by. It will be no conception of *our* judgment: no conception thought in the first person, in the thought of judgment that every judgment as such is. Not being a conception of *our* judgment, it will be no conception of *judgment*.

In judging, I think it valid so to judge. As my thought of the validity of my judgment *is* this judgment, what I judge must provide for my recognition of the validity of judging it. This explains the pointlessness of a popular response to skepticism. A skeptic finds he cannot achieve conviction that anything he thinks, or, rather, would think did he not engage in the reflection that shatters his conviction, is true. The response

tells him that, his incapacity to reach conviction notwithstanding, what he thinks may well be true. Moreover, and for good measure, it may be no accident that what he thinks is true, again, irrespective of whether he has knowledge of that fact, the fact that it is no accident. This is an answer to the skeptic whose meaning it is that it cannot be received. He asks in the first person: am *I* right to judge that things are so? An answer he can receive provides him with knowledge that it is right so to judge, *knowing which is so judging*. The pointless answer implies that there is no such knowledge.

If someone else tells me that my judgment (what I would judge if I could convince myself of its truth) is true, this means no more to me than that he judges what I judge (would judge, could I comprehend it to be valid so to judge). But, being tortured by skepticism, I am not concerned with a deficiency peculiar to me, or a particular act of judgment, which someone else, or another act of judgment, could supply. Suppose I undertake to contemplate the further judgment that the first judgment is non-accidentally true. My helpful friend tells me that that judgment, too, is true. As far as I can tell, the one judgment is as baseless as the other. The assertion that, in that further judgment, I know (would know) my first judgment to be knowledge makes no sense to me. The skeptic's question is distorted from the start as it is made to seem as though it were the question whether given judgments are valid: judgments that exist as a natural reality, independently of the thought of their validity. A judgment, being the first-person thought of itself, is nothing given. The problem is how I can understand myself *in* making a judgment. Thus the question is how there can be such a thing as judgment: an act that *is* the thought of its own validity, and whose validity, therefore, is objective.

## 6.2. Externalism, E-explanation

I think my judgment non-accidentally valid *in* judging. We must see how its non-accidentality is understood in the judgment itself. In general, something is recognized to be no accident as it is referred to a cause. Something is an accident if it happens to be as it is; it is no accident if it



must be as it is. And we recognize that something must be as it is and does not just happen to be so as we refer it to its cause.<sup>1</sup> Hence, in order to clarify the idea of a judgment that is valid not per accidens, we must specify a suitable cause of judgment. Equivalently, we must seek a suitable explanation of judgment. For a cause is what explains.

It may seem that it is one thing to explain why someone judges as she does, another, to establish that she is right so to judge. We may imagine all manner of causes working on the subject: her psychic endowment, upbringing, social class, historical situation. As we explain her judgment by these causes, we do not, in so explaining it, recognize that things are as she judges them to be. That these causes explain her judgment is one thing; that her judgment is valid, another. Of course, her judgment may be true while springing from these causes. The point is that explaining her judgment by them and thinking her judgment true are distinct acts of the mind. They are distinct because, judging the truth of her judgment, I attend to what she judges alone; explaining her judgment by these causes, I attend to a given character of her who judges: her psychic endowment, her upbringing, her social class.

With respect to a cause of this kind, we may frame the hypothesis that a judgment, given that it springs from this cause, is likely to be true. For example, we may assert that our psychic dispositions are as they are on account of selective pressures on our forbears, which explains why, for the most part, judgments reflecting these dispositions are true. This does not change the fact that referring a judgment to such a disposition is not the same as recognizing it to be valid. To think that a judgment springs from the disposition is not to answer the question of its truth. If it were, there would be no such thing as a hypothesis that a judgment is likely to be true given that it reflects the disposition in question. The disposition would be truth itself, and the thought of a judgment that springs from it and yet is false would be absurd; it would bear the form *p* and not *p*.

We may want to say that a judgment is likely to be true in virtue of springing from a given cause. For we may want to say that it is no accident when a judgment so caused is true: in virtue of having the cause that it does, the judgment is knowledge. As we say this, we hold on to the thought that referring a judgment to this cause is not recognizing it

to be true. Let us call an explanation of a judgment by something that does not—not as such, not as explaining the judgment—establish the truth of the judgment it explains an *E-explanation*. Let us consider whether we can think a judgment to be knowledge in virtue of having a suitable E-explanation.

The first thing we note is that an E-explanation cannot be thought in the first person. Thinking oneself, in the first person, to judge that things are so is thinking it right so to judge. Hence there is no thinking in the first person of something as settling that someone judges that things are so without therein thinking of it as establishing that it is right so to judge. As I think of my judgment in judging, the idea that something could explain why I judge as I do while leaving open whether it is right so to judge makes no sense.

We pretend to think the following: I explain why I judge *A* by an E-cause. As a cause confers necessity on what it causes, I do not just happen to judge *A*; I must, I cannot but, judge this, on account of that cause. Yet, so we are supposing, the thought that I must judge *A* is not the thought that it is valid so to judge. The cause is an E-cause: conceiving it to be the cause of my judgment is not, in the same act of the mind, recognizing my judgment to be true. I comprehend this in so explaining my judgment; I comprehend that what explains my judgment is an E-cause. Hence, as I think my judgment to be necessary on account of its E-cause, I hold open the question whether *A*. I think that I must judge *A* and, in thinking this, reckon that it may well be that non-*A*.

It may seem I must despair at this thought. I am fettered by dispositions that chain me to judgments that, for all I know, may be false. Or I am estranged from my judgment in this thought. I am not inside it, I look upon my judgment from the outside, as though it were not mine, but someone else's, a stranger's. Or, finding a nearer strangeness in my material being, I conceive my judgment as though it were an affection of my body, as external to me as my body is, while surely I am more intimate with my judgment than I am with my body. I want to be inside it, I want to be my judgment, in a deeper way than I am my body.

The idea of being one with one's thought strikes a chord. Yet let us meditate on the thought over which I am to despair and in which I am to be estranged from myself. This is what I am to think: I—not a bene:

I—must judge that things are so, and yet it may be that they are not. Do these words express a thought? Do I think something as I speak these words to myself? No. The first-person thought of a judgment is nothing other than this judgment. My thought that I must judge *A* is nothing other than my judgment *A*. Hence, thinking that I must judge *A* and that it may be that non-*A* is—would be—thinking: *A* and it may be that non-*A*. And this is no thought. Leaving open whether it is correct to judge *A*, I suspend judgment on *A*. And no act of the mind is identified by the words: *judging that things are so while suspending judgment on whether they are so*. We are considering the notion that, accepting an E-explanation of my judgment, I fall into despair or am estranged from myself, which, we say in a tone of alarm, I must not do. There is no cause for alarm. There is no such thing as accepting an E-explanation of one's own judgment. *E-explanation of one's own judgment*: these words do not add up to a concept.

In judging, I reject the notion that my judgment may have an E-cause. This does not mean that no judgment has an E-cause. It means that an E-explanation can be valid only if the judgment it explains is not. If the judgment is valid, then so is its exclusion of any E-explanation of it. There are valid E-explanations only of invalid judgments; proposing an E-explanation of a judgment is to judge it invalid.<sup>2</sup> It follows that a judgment cannot be knowledge in virtue of having a suitable E-explanation. There is no externalist account of knowledge, no externalist epistemology.

It may be objected that someone may judge that things are so, her judgment be valid since, indeed, things are so, and yet her judgment be caused by something that does not establish the truth of her judgment. So the judgment is valid—true, anyway—and yet has an E-explanation. This objection relies on a distinction of the truth of a judgment from its status as knowledge. In a case of the sort the objection brings forth, the judgment is true, but merely accidentally so. However, we saw it is an error to think of a judgment whose truth is an accident as valid. The concept of validity at work *in* judgment is the concept of inner validity, and in the case we are called upon to imagine the judgment lacks that. It is invalid by its own measure. A judgment that conforms to its own concept of validity is incapable of being explained by something that does not establish its validity.<sup>3</sup>

### 6.3. The first-person character of the necessity of judgment

I comprehend the necessity of judging as I do *in* this very judgment; my thought of its necessity is the very judgment of whose necessity it is the thought. So the thought of this necessity is a first-person thought.

The grammar of its expression in language marks this. We see it in the following contrast. Suppose someone undermined the foundations of his house. Then it came down. Knowing that its foundations were undermined, we may say: it had to come down; it was necessary that it did. This is a necessity *that* something should happen. Thinking of “that” as introducing a fact, we may call it the *necessity of a fact*. It may seem that, when I apprehend a necessity of judging as I do, I likewise think of a necessity of something’s happening: as the house must come down, as it cannot fail to do so, so I must judge that things are so; I cannot escape doing that. However, speaking of a necessity of *my* judgment, and expressing the thought of the necessity of judging *as I do*, I speak in this way: it is necessary *to* judge that things are so, and impossible *to* judge otherwise. We may call this—a necessity *to* as opposed to a necessity *that*—the *necessity of an act*.

The distinction is familiar from moral philosophy. There are two uses of “good”: *It would be good if such-and-such were the case* and *It is good to do A*. In the one use, the term signifying the object said to be good is a sentence, in the other, it is a verb. If we call what is signified by a sentence a fact, what is signified by a verb, an act, then “good” is said, in one use, of a fact, in the other, of an act. There is an analogous distinction of uses of normative terms such as “ought”: there is *Such-and-such ought to be the case* and *One ought to do A*. In one use, the object of “ought” is signified by a sentence, in the other, by a verb. The “ought” attaches, here, to a fact, there, to an act. Finally, we encounter this distinction in modal terms: *It is necessary that such-and-such should be the case* and *It is necessary to do A*. What is necessary is signified by a sentence: necessity of a fact; or by a verb: necessity of an act.

The distinction of the necessity of an act from the necessity of a fact is of supreme importance in moral philosophy. We cannot develop its

moral significance here. But we can say that the necessity of an act is a necessity the thought of which is a first-person thought, which thought therefore is the same act as the one of whose necessity it is the thought. By contrast, the necessity of a fact, supposing it involves the subject who thinks this necessity, is not originally thought in the first person. “It was necessary that I should do this; I mean: it had to happen”, I might say, thinking, perhaps, that fate compelled me, or, should I be naturalistically inclined, that the nature of my faculty of desire fixed it that I should do it. In this case, it was necessary that I should do what I did, so I think, quite independently of my thought of this necessity. That my action is the work of that fate or that nature is a fact that obtains no matter whether or not I appreciate it. So my thought is not, not originally, a first-person thought. By contrast, when I say, “I have to do this, I cannot act otherwise”, I express the necessity of doing what *I* am doing. As this necessity is thought in the first person originally, it is a necessity that is nothing other than my recognition of this very necessity.<sup>4</sup>

We contrasted necessity of an act with necessity of a fact. This may give rise to the notion that the first is practical necessity, thought in a practical thought, the second, theoretical necessity, thought in a theoretical thought. For, facts appear to be the object of theoretical knowledge, acts, of practical knowledge. (This would be a manifestation of the infatuation with agency mentioned in Chapter 3.) This is wrong. The necessity of an act is necessity thought in the first person; it is self-conscious necessity.

When we distinguish necessity of an act from necessity of a fact, it may seem we can consider the necessity of a judgment in two ways, as act, or as fact. These are not in competition with each other as they pertain to distinct kinds of modality. While, in judging, I think it necessary to judge as I do, I may realize that it is not necessary that I should so judge. I can imagine that, had things gone differently in the past, my past, or that of the human race—had the mechanisms of belief-formation received a different shape in the evolution of humankind or had I received a different upbringing, in a different society—I might have judged differently. (This is a guise of the idea that there are two standpoints or perspectives, from which we can consider judgment: the first-person and the third-person standpoint, or perspective.) However, the con-

sciousness of necessity that is internal to a judgment excludes an E-explanation of that judgment. And the necessity of a judgment considered as the necessity of a fact is the necessity conferred on it by an E-cause: it is a cause that does not, as explaining the judgment it explains, establish its validity. If it did, then to refer the judgment to that cause would be to recognize the validity of this judgment and thus would be to judge what it judges. And then, contrary to our supposition, the necessity would be thought in the first person.

(We need not deny that, in the first-person thought of a judgment with contrary, there is an ineliminable consciousness of its own contingency. We need not deny this here, for, if it is so, it will transpire in the course of our unfolding of the self-consciousness of judgment. And so it will indeed. However, this consciousness of contingency will not be placed alongside the consciousness of necessity that is the first-person thought of the judgment. It will be internal to the very thought of its own necessity that judgment, and thus judgment with contrary, is. We are rejecting precisely, and only, the suggestion that my thought of the necessity of judging as I do can be conjoined with an explanation of my judgment, and a thought of its necessity, that is indifferent to its truth.<sup>5</sup>)

#### 6.4. The explanation of judgment, its universality and objectivity

In judging, I think my judgment non-accidentally valid. Thus I think my judgment to have a suitable cause. This cause—what, in judging, I think explains my judgment—is no E-cause. My explanation of my judgment locates its source in something that I understand to establish the validity of my judgment. Thus the explanation of a valid judgment bears this form: explaining the judgment is the same act of the mind as recognizing its validity. This explanation is internal to the judgment it explains, for, recognizing the validity of judging that things are so is nothing other than judging things to be so. The explanation is a first-person thought.

Explaining a valid judgment is the same act of the mind as recognizing its validity. This describes the explanation of valid judgment. It

equally describes the thought of its validity: recognizing the validity of one's judgment is understanding why one so judges. For suppose it were not. Then something in which, or by which, I recognize the validity of judging that things are so would leave open whether I judge that they are; it would be something that fails to settle, and that I understand to fail to settle, that I so judge. Then the explanation why I so judge would have to invoke a further factor, which I do not yet apprehend in recognizing the validity of my judgment. My judgment would have an E-explanation and thus be invalid, contrary to our supposition. In the recognition of my judgment's validity I understand myself to have hold of what explains the act whose validity I recognize.

As the explanation of a valid judgment is the recognition of its validity, what we said about the validity of judgment holds of its explanation: the explanation appeals to no given character of the subject of the judgment, no character of her that one does not know her to possess in judging that which she judges. If it did, then explaining the judgment would not be the same as recognizing its validity. Therefore the explanation is *universal*: the cause it provides is such as to explain the judgment in anyone. For it invokes nothing that is particular to one subject judging it and distinguishes it from another who judges the same. Such a thing would be a given character: something not known *in* the judgment. If it were known in the judgment itself, then subjects would be united in it as they are united in judging what they do. So the cause in question does not explain this subject's judgment as opposed to that subject's judgment; it explains *the judgment*. Furthermore, as the explanation of a valid judgment appeals to no given character of her who judges it, the judgment is as objective as its validity is: a valid judgment does not depend on any given character of the subject, as no such character figures in the true explanation why she judges as she does.

### 6.5. Judgment with and without contrary, validated and valid in itself

In Chapter 1, we saw that Thomas Nagel finds the objectivity of thought to reside in its self-consciousness. This is the passage we read:

I would explain the point of Descartes's *cogito* this way. It reveals a limit to the kind of self-criticism that begins when one looks at oneself from the outside and considers the ways in which one's convictions might have been produced by causes which fail to justify and validate them. (*The Last Word*, p. 19)

Thinking a thought, thinking it straight, is thinking it to be valid. Nagel sees that this informs the way in which we can understand thought, acts of judgment, "convictions". Thinking straight what we think, we cannot explain our thinking what we do "by causes that fail to justify and validate" it. A cause fails to justify and validate the judgment if explaining the judgment by this cause is a separate act of the mind from recognizing its validity. Nagel suggests that, explaining a thought we think straight, we refer it to a cause that *validates* it. He also says that, ultimately, thought is *valid in itself*. As valid in itself, a thought requires nothing to *validate* it. A thought that is valid in itself understands itself through itself, through its being the thought that it is, and that is, through its thinking what it does.

Indeed we can distinguish two forms of judgment according to the way in which the judgment is explained: judgment that is valid in itself, and judgment that is *validated*. Either what is judged, on its own and through itself, explains the act of judging it. That things are as I judge them to be explains why I judge them to be so; recognizing that things are so is comprehending why I judge that they are. In this case, the judgment is valid *in itself*. Or something other than what I judge explains my judgment: I judge *A* because *B*, *B* being distinct from *A*. *B* explains why I judge *A* as it establishes the validity of so judging; what explains my judgment settles it that things are as I judge them to be: given *B*, it must be the case that *A*. In this case, the judgment is *validated*, or *justified*.

Judgment that is valid in itself has no contrary; judgment that is validated, or justified, is with contrary. If what explains someone's judgment is nothing but what she judges, then judging this, on its own and through itself, is recognizing the validity of her judgment. Therein it is, on its own and through itself, understanding why she judges it. And then the judgment has no contrary. To judge its contrary would be to



judge something that is such that judging it is, on its own and through itself, recognizing the invalidity of judging it, therein comprehending why one does not so judge. And this is no description of an act of judgment. Conversely, a judgment with contrary cannot be understood in this way. Apprehending what someone judges in a judgment that has a contrary is not, on its own and through itself, recognizing the validity of her judgment. Hence it is not, on its own and through itself, comprehending why someone so judges. A judgment with contrary is valid in the manner of being *validated*; the thought of its validity is a thought of something that validates it.

### 6.6. Justification; its objectivity

A justification, or validation, is thought in the first person. Someone asks, Why do you think *A*? Because *B*, she answers, *I think A because B*. Or, *I judge A on the basis of B*, or *I am concluding A from B*, etc. (Representing justification in this way we abstract from something that will be important later: what justifies conjoins something general, a rule, with something specific, a condition of the rule. For example, I judge that the house collapsed because its foundations had been undermined, bringing to bear a principle of gravitation. Or I judge that the man before me is dead because there is no condensation on the mirror I hold before his mouth, bringing to bear general knowledge relating to the dew point of air. To simplify the exposition, we abstract from this structure of what justifies for now. We shall lift this abstraction in Chapter 8.) As an explanation of a valid judgment, a justification does not appeal to a given character of the subject; it does not explain this subject's judgment as opposed to that subject's judgment, but *the judgment*; and a judgment, so explained, is objective.

*I think A because B*. In so explaining why I judge what I do, I do not turn away from what I judge to a given character of me, the subject judging it. When someone asks me, *Why do you think A?*, and I say, *Because B*, he is to comprehend why I think what I do by considering what I think, and only that: *A*, and *B*, and one on the basis of the other. If he takes me to speak of a given character of the subject of the judg-

ment I explain, then he does not receive my answer in the sense in which I give it. When I say, *I think A because B*, justifying my thought, then what I cite as the cause of my thought establishes its truth: it shows that things cannot be otherwise. Someone receives my explanation in this way as he answers: *I understand; I see that it must be as you say; it must be the case that A, given B*. And when he says *I do not understand*, he means, *I do not follow; I do not see how what you say shows that things are as you say they are*.<sup>6</sup>

As I justify my judgment that things are so, I do not refer to any given character of the subject who so judges. What explains my judgment is no given character; it is something of which I am conscious *in* the judgment I explain. Therefore my explanation does not explain the judgment in one subject as distinct from the same judgment in another. *Why do you think A? Because B*. When I so explain my judgment, and you accept my explanation, accept it in the sense in which I give it, then, in accepting it, you judge what I judge, and what explains my judgment explains yours. We not only share in the judgment; we share in its cause. As the explanation of the judgment is objective, the same explains the judgment in me and in you.

*I think A because B*. If this explains why I think A, then my judgment does not depend on a given character of me who so judges. It is not necessary, in order to make it intelligible why I judge as I do, to appeal to any given character of me, the one who judges. My judgment, the act, is objective. This is what I think in so explaining my judgment.

The objectivity of justification entails its internality to the judgment justified. This may be missed. What justifies, *B*, is something other than what is judged in the judgment it justifies, *A*. And this may appear to entail a distinction of acts: I judge *A*, and I judge *B*; there are two judgments, *A* and *B*, which are related in a certain way as *B* explains why I judge *A*. The relation may be this: judging *A* because *B*, I move from the one judgment to the other. Perhaps this reflects a psychic mechanism, by which judgments give rise to further judgments. Perhaps this can be developed into a computational account of inference.<sup>7</sup>

If someone judges *B*, and then *A*, she does not on that account infer *A* from *B*. This does not change when we postulate a mechanism conjoining the judgments. Nor does it change if we add further things, for

example, equip the subject with a notion that *A* follows from *B* or with a sense of the rightness of judging *A*, a sense that manifests a suitable disposition. It does not matter what we add. As I explain *I think A because B*, the truth of what I say does not reside in a nexus of distinct judgments *A* and *B*. If it did, I could be aware of this nexus only in a third act, distinct from both these judgments. Grown to whatever monstrosity, the nexus will remain a *given* character of the subject of the judgment. It will be a given character as the thought of it will be a different act of the mind from the judgment *A*. And then the thought of the nexus will not constitute a recognition of the validity of judging *A*; an explanation of a judgment in terms of it will not be a justification.

Someone judges *A* on the basis of *B* only if she comprehends *B* to provide sufficient grounds for judging *A*, equivalently, only if she recognizes *B* to establish the validity of judging *A*. And recognizing the validity of judging something is judging it. A justification articulates the self-consciousness of the judgment it justifies; it articulates the thought of its validity that *that* judgment is. It is true, I judge *A*, and I judge *B*. However, as I judge *A* on the basis of *B*, these are not two acts of the mind, but one. What explains a valid judgment establishes its validity: *B* explains why I judge *A* only if *B* is such that, given *B*, it must be the case that *A*; given *B*, things cannot be otherwise than *A*. Moreover, if *B* explains why I judge *A*, then *B* is so related to *A* through itself, not through some third element; the thought of *B* is the thought of it as establishing the validity of judging *A*. For suppose this nexus of *B* to *A* were not thought in the thought of *B*. Then, in saying why I judge *A*, I would have to appeal to, not only *B*, but, in addition, this nexus. Only in this way would I ensure that explaining my judgment as I do so is recognizing its validity. But then we have a new *B*. Hence it cannot be true in general that something other than the thought of *B* is needed to provide for the recognition of the validity of judging *A*.<sup>8</sup>

If I judge *A* because *B*, then my judgment *B* through itself provides for my recognition that it is right to judge *A*. In judging *B* I recognize the validity of judging *A*. So my thought of the validity of judging *A* is not a different act of the mind from my judgment *B*. Rather, my thought of the validity of judging *A* is, articulated more fully, the thought of the validity of so judging *as established by B*. And as thinking it right to

judge *A* is judging *A*, what I judge, judging *A*, is, articulated more fully, *A on the basis of B*. When I say that I judge *A* because *B*, I do not represent a given character of me, the subject who judges *A*. I articulate what I judge in judging *A*. I do not move from one judgment to another. My judgment grows into itself: I judge *A through B*. This is how Frege defines inference: “judging in the consciousness of other truths as justifying grounds is called inferring”. Kant’s account of the conclusion of an inference makes the same point.<sup>9</sup>

## *Chapter Seven*

# The Power of Judgment

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### 7.1. The insufficiency of justification

The validity of a judgment is objective: it depends on what is judged alone, and on no given character of her who judges it. As the objectivity of judgment is its self-consciousness, the act of judging is as objective as its validity is: a valid act of judgment depends on what it judges alone, and on no given character of the subject; what she judges explains why she judges it. The idea that a valid judging may be explained by something not comprehended in the judgment itself, that it may depend on a given character of the subject, dissolves the understanding of judgment as objectively valid.

Yet it is unclear whether we comprehend the objectivity of judgment through our reflections in the preceding chapter. We considered two forms of explanation that exhibit the objectivity of the judgment explained. In an explanation of the first form, what is judged, on its own and through itself, explains why it is judged: the judgment is valid in itself. In an explanation of the second form, what explains a judgment refers what it judges to something other, therewith extending what is judged: the judgment is *validated*, its explanation is a justification. However, the second form is not self-standing. And the first form cannot sustain it.

As I explain why I judge *A* by something other, *B*, I judge both *A* and *B*. These judgments are joined in one act of the mind: my judgment *B* is internal to my thought of the validity of judging *A*, which *is* my judgment *A*. Thus, explaining that I judge *A* because *B*, I articulate what I judge, judging *A*: I judge *A on the basis of B*. However, the nexus is not symmetric. Judging *A* because *B*, I do not, in the same act, judge *B* because *A*. Judging *A* because *B*, I recognize *B* to rule out non-*A*. I do not, in the same act, comprehend *A* to rule out non-*B*. My thought of the validity of judging *A* resides in my judgment *B*, but my thought of the validity of judging *B* does not reside in my judgment *A*.

How then do I, judging *A* on the basis of *B*, recognize the validity of judging *B*? As my recognition of the validity of judging something is nothing other than my explanation why I so judge, this is: how do I comprehend why I judge *B* in a way that displays the objectivity of my judgment, its depending on nothing but what I judge and on no character of me who judges it? Without comprehending this, I do not comprehend how I can think it valid to judge *A*, judging *A* on the basis of *B*. For, the thought of the validity of judging *B* is internal to my judging *A on the basis of B*. Of course my judgment may deepen itself further and comprehend within itself the judgment of something that establishes the validity of judging the ground on which I rest my judgment: I may judge *A* on the basis of *B*, judging the latter on the basis of *C*. But now the validity of judging *C* is not comprehended in the enlarged act. There is a regress.

We may want to conclude that we cannot justify *everything*; we must take some things for granted if we are to justify others. While this limits justification, it does not affect the soundness of justification within this limit. However, this is not a thought I can have of my judgment *in* judging. As I judge *A* on the basis of *B*, my thought of the validity of judging *A* includes my thought of the validity of judging *B*: judging *A* on the basis of *B*, I think it right to judge *A in the manner of thinking it right to judge B*. If I cannot understand why I judge *B* in a way that reveals it to be valid so to judge, then, saying that I think *A* because *B*, I have done nothing to explain why I judge *A in that way*. What I present is not a justification; at best, it is an E-explanation, reporting that my judgment of *B* makes me think *A*, by saying which I do not even

pretend to exclude that things are otherwise than I judge them to be, judging A.

If justification were the only manner in which to recognize the validity of judging what one does, then recognizing the validity of judging one thing would be recognizing the validity of judging another. And there is no meaning in saying that to judge something is to judge something else.<sup>1</sup> Hence, if justification were the only way in which to comprehend why one judges as one does, there would be no such thing as comprehending this. And then there would be no such thing as thinking one's judgment valid. But we do judge, and judge one thing on the basis of another. Thereby we show that there is a different manner of recognizing, in judging, the validity of our judgment.<sup>2</sup>

## 7.2. Judgment without contrary; its inability to justify

The problem may seem to lie in the fact that the chain of justification remains incomplete. If only I could complete the chain, I would comprehend the validity of judging its first member, indeed, all its members, therein understanding why I judge them. Now we distinguished judgments that may be validated from judgments that are valid in themselves. When a judgment is valid in itself, then judging what one does, on its own and through itself, is recognizing the validity of one's judgment. Therein it is, on its own and through itself, comprehending why one judges it. Hence a judgment that is valid in itself requires no justification. It is not even conceivable that something should justify it. A judgment without contrary is complete within itself; there is no opening in it for something other than what it judges to be included in the thought of its validity. Thus it may seem that the chain of justification comes to a close in such a judgment; it may seem that a judgment without contrary provides an end point of justification.

It only seems that way. A judgment without contrary not only does not admit the idea of another judgment justifying it; it equally repels the idea of its justifying another judgment. Not only does it make no sense to think of a judgment without contrary as resting on anything; it is equally senseless to think of anything as resting on it. A judgment resting on a judgment without contrary would be contained in the latter judg-

ment. And a judgment whose validity is comprehended in a judgment without contrary is without contrary. A judgment without contrary does not establish the validity of any judgment with contrary. If I think *A* because *B*, then *B* does not, on its own and through itself, explain why I think *B*.<sup>3</sup>

We may think that, even as there is no such thing as a last member of a chain of justification, we can yet think the chain to be complete. So let us consider the idea of a *complete* chain of justification. A complete chain is a unified judgment that comprises all its members. What *it* judges, on its own and through itself, provides for the comprehension of the validity of judging it and thus for the explanation of this very judgment. For, as the chain is complete, no otherness remains, which would require turning to something else through which to comprehend the validity of judging it. The complete chain is a judgment without contrary. In the complete chain, its members are moments of the judgment without contrary. So a judgment that as a member of a chain of *justification* is with contrary, is without contrary as the chain is *complete*. This is incoherent.

There is no meaning in the idea of a complete chain of justification, which would constitute a judgment without contrary. Nor is there meaning in the idea of an end point of justification, which, again, would be a judgment without contrary. These two ways of grounding justification correspond to the Thesis and the Antithesis of the Antinomies of Kant's Transcendental Dialectic: the Antithesis locates the ground of the series in the series as a whole, the Thesis, in its first member.<sup>4</sup> Kant takes the fact that judgments of experience are incapable of being comprehended in either of these ways to be an indirect proof that our knowledge of what is given to the senses is only of appearances. We shall turn to this later, if only briefly, asking whether it is a thought we can think in judging what we do. For now, we take it to be known in the self-consciousness of judgment—known by anyone in judging anything at all—that the formal object of judgment is reality, not appearance.

### 7.3. Explanation by power

We distinguished two ways of explaining valid judgment: a judgment may be explained by what it judges alone, or by something other than



what it judges. The dichotomy is familiar. It underlies the opposition of foundationalism and coherentism. Coherentism is the idea that a judgment can be recognized to be valid only through another judgment; foundationalism is the notion that there are judgments that can be recognized to be valid through themselves; they are self-evident. However, while there are such judgments, they are without contrary and therefore do not justify any judgment with contrary. They are not fit to ban coherentism. The idea that there are judgments with contrary that yet are valid in themselves is the *Myth of the Given*. This myth is the incoherent notion that what is judged in a judgment with contrary is the Absolute. The Myth of the Given is a species of idolatry.

Judgment that is valid in itself, and judgment that is validated by something other: as the Myth is a myth, these cannot be the only forms of comprehending the validity of a judgment. If they were, there would be no such thing as judgment with contrary. We must seek a form of explanation beyond this dichotomy. We find it in the idea of a *power*.

In judging, thinking my judgment valid, I exclude the contrary judgment: judging that things are so, I exclude that they are not. Thus a judgment with contrary is a thought of its own modality: I must so judge, I cannot judge the contrary; or, so things must be, they cannot be otherwise. From what do I exclude the contrary judgment? We may answer: from nothing in particular; I exclude it, period. This is the right answer. A different way to put this answer is this: in judging, I exclude the contrary judgment *from judgment*. I need not mention anything from which I exclude the judgment, as it is already given by the description of what is excluded as a judgment. Excluding the contrary judgment, I think it does not conform to what it is, a judgment; it is in disagreement with itself, with judgment. Conversely, in judging, I think my judgment to conform to what it is, a judgment; I think it to be in agreement with itself, with judgment. As I think this, I distinguish judgment from judgment: judgment, the act, from judgment, the concept. In a judgment with contrary, in the thought of its validity, I refer judgment, the act, to judgment, the concept.

We can equally say, I refer judgment, the act, to judgment, the power. In general, a power is the concept, or nature, of something, considered as explaining it. A nature, or concept, explains what bears this nature,

or realizes this concept, therein explaining the latter's conformity to its nature, or concept. For example, the nature of pear trees may explain why a given pear tree is blossoming, explaining the conformity of its present bloom to its nature. Insofar as that pear tree's bloom does not conform to its nature as pear-tree bloom (if it is blooming at the wrong time or if its buds do not open), what is happening cannot be explained by the nature of the pear tree, but must be put down to circumstances in which this tree finds itself.

The concept of judgment, as it is comprehended *in* judgment, is power, for it explains judgments that conform to it. This is so because, in judging, I think it valid so to judge, which is to say, I think my judgment to conform to its concept. Moreover, I think that the validity of my judgment, and that is, its conformity to its concept, is no accident: my judgment is valid not on account of circumstances in which I happen to judge, but in virtue of being the judgment that it is, that is, in virtue of judging what it does. Since the conformity of my judgment to its concept is no accident, the concept of judgment explains my judgment, therein explaining its conformity to its concept. In judging, then, referring my judgment to its concept, I refer it to the power of judgment. I refer judgment, the act, to judgment, the power, as to that which explains, and therein secures the validity of, the act.<sup>5</sup>

The thought of the power of judgment is the thought of the modality of the judgment, which is internal to judgment with contrary. A power confers necessity on its act. My thought that I must judge what I do, that I cannot judge the contrary, is the thought of my judgment as an act of the power of judgment. The power of judgment is the cause that renders valid judgment necessary.

The concept of judgment, as it is thought in judgment, is the concept of knowledge. Hence, the power to which I refer my judgment is the power of knowledge. The idea of someone's judging that things are so includes the idea of his judgment as springing from the power of knowledge. This informs the apprehension of anyone as saying anything. Suppose you say something, and someone else says the contrary. Unless you think of his speech as an act of the power of knowledge, there cannot be the least idea of his raising a question for you. If this idea does not inform your apprehension of him, then you conceive his speech as

you would words that a monkey dancing on a typewriter produced on the paper. The conception of another as a power of knowledge is prior to any notion you might have of his general intelligence and his competence in specific matters. It is nothing other than the idea of him as a subject of judgment.

#### 7.4. The power to know through affection

If I can judge what I do only as my senses are or have been affected, then my judgment is not without contrary. For, in a judgment without contrary, what is judged, on its own, explains why it is judged. There is no space for a condition of its being judged that is independent of things' being as they are judged to be. Sensory affection is such a condition. So a judgment has a contrary if it is possible only through affection.

A valid judgment can depend on affection only in a such a way as to involve a recognition of this dependence. A judgment that depends on affection without itself being a consciousness of this dependence is invalid.<sup>6</sup> Thinking my judgment valid, I am conscious of its dependence on affection in judging what I do; the dependence on sensory affection is internal to what I judge by means of this affection. In the primary case, a judgment with contrary depends on affection by the object of this very judgment. This dependence is comprehended in the judgment; it is reflected in its logical form, for example, in its bearing a tense or deploying demonstrative forms of reference.<sup>7</sup> In this way, the judgment is of something *as* affecting the senses of her who so judges. Let us call judgments that depend on affection by their object *judgments of perception*. For the moment, we confine our discussion to these. If there are judgments depending on affection beyond them, this will transpire in the course of our reflections. For it will be internal to the self-consciousness of the judgment of perception.

I refer my judgment of perception to the power of knowledge specifically as a power of knowledge involving the affection of specific senses. When someone asks why I think *A*, and this is a judgment of perception, I can answer: I can see (or saw), or hear (or heard), or feel (or felt), that *A*. In so answering, I represent my judgment as an act of

the power to know through a specific sense, or senses. It has been said that statements like *I see that A*, etc., do not answer the question, *Why do you think this?*, but the question, *How do you know this?*<sup>28</sup> The suggestion of an opposition is infelicitous, for I can explain why I think something in such a way as to show how I know it. But it is right that seeing, feeling, etc. are species of knowing: the verbs “seeing”, “feeling”, etc. signify ways in which one may know; they signify aspects of the power of knowledge. In responding to someone who asks why I think things are so by saying *I see that things are as I judge them to be*, I put into words something I already comprehend in the judgment. I do not go beyond that which I understand in judging what I do; I articulate an understanding internal to my judgment: the thought of it as an act of the power to acquire knowledge through affection.

Recognizing my judgment’s dependence on affection, I understand it to be knowledge, which understanding I express in, for example, *I see that*. This has given rise to the idea that it is in virtue of depending on affection that a judgment is knowledge. This jibes with the idea that thought is objective in virtue of being of something other: something I know by being affected by it is as it is independently of my knowing it to be so. However, nothing we said suggests that the character of a judgment of perception as knowledge rests on its dependence on affection. That a judgment depends on affection, as such, does not show that it is valid. In judging what I do, I refer my judgment to its concept, that is, to the power of knowledge. As my judgment depends on affection, I understand, in this judgment, the power of knowledge to be, specifically, a power to know through affection.

### 7.5. The form of explanation by power; the way it resolves our difficulty, and avoids the Myth

In a judgment with contrary, I think it necessary to judge as I do and thus refer my judgment to a cause that confers necessity upon it. It seemed that, if my judgment has a contrary, I can explain why I judge what I do only by something other than what I judge. If this were true, there would be no such thing as judgment with contrary. Now we see that a

judgment may be explained by something that is not other than what it judges, and yet the judgment is not on that account valid in itself: judgment, the act, may be explained by judgment, the power. Here I do not explain my judgment by something other: referring my judgment to the power of knowledge, I do not enlarge what I judge. The thought of the power of knowledge is contained in the *I think*. In fact, the *I think* is the power of knowledge; the power of knowledge is comprehended in any judgment with contrary.

I think my judgment of perception valid as I refer it, not to something other than what I judge, but to judgment, the power, the power of sensory knowledge. Thus a judgment of perception is like a judgment that is valid in itself in that the thought of its validity does not involve something other than what it judges. This explains why, in some languages, verbs signifying modes of sensory knowledge, specifically seeing, also signify judgment without contrary: intellectual intuition. It also explains the attraction of the Myth of the Given, which transfers the character of judgment without contrary to judgments of perception.

As a judgment's thought of its validity resides in its reference to the power of knowledge, the threat of a regress of justification is averted. But we must be sure to understand correctly how it is averted. In a judgment of perception, I think it necessary to judge as I do as I refer my judgment to the power to know by means of a certain sense, sight, for example: *I see that A*. As I do not, in the thought of the validity of judging as I do, appeal to something other than what I judge, it may seem that my judgment provides justification with an end point. But this is wrong. We can bring out the wrongness by observing that the explanation of a judgment by the power of knowledge does not exclude its explanation by something other than what it judges. A judgment of perception not only does not repel its explanation by something other; it contains the idea of its justification. It does so in two ways.

First, knowing through perception *that* things are so, I do not therein know *why* they are. I have not specified a cause of their being so, which would show that they do not just happen to be so, but must be. Indeed, it is proper to say that, knowing that things are so, I do *not yet* know why they are. For, what I know in a judgment of perception does not repel the question why it is as it is. As there is such a thing as explaining

why things are as I perceive them to be, there is such a thing as justifying my judgment that they are. It is true that not every justification of a judgment that things are so is an explanation why they are. But the converse holds: an explanation why things are a certain way is, as such, a justification for judging that they are that way. As *B* explains why *A*, things cannot be otherwise than *A*, given *B*. Thus, explaining *A* by *B*, I understand *B* to establish the validity of judging *A*. I recognize, through *B*, the validity of judging *A*, and therein understand myself to judge *A* on the basis of *B*. As what is judged in a judgment of perception is such as to be comprehended through something other, the act of judging it is such as to be comprehended through something other.

Secondly, a judgment of perception lies open to reflection on its validity in the light of other things one knows. We understand an exchange like the following: “I see *A*.” — “I do not think you do: *A* cannot be, because *B*.” A judgment of perception may be proven wrong by something that establishes that things are otherwise than they are judged to be in this judgment. Conversely, in judging *A*, I assert not only the invalidity of judging non-*A*, but the invalidity of judging *non-A* on the basis of *B*, for any *B*. In my judgment of perception, I exclude as invalid the judgment of anything that would reveal things to be otherwise than I judge them to be.<sup>9</sup> Such is the force of a judgment that rests itself in the power of knowledge. But as I exclude, in judging *A*, any grounds for judging the contrary, I conceive *A* to be such that a judgment on the matter—a response to the question whether *A*—may rest itself on grounds. I conceive what I judge as capable of being deepened to comprehend something that justifies judging it.<sup>10</sup>

Judgments of perception do not end a regress of justification. If they did, the idea of justifying a judgment of perception would make no sense; an exchange such as the one above would be unintelligible; the idea of an explanation why things are as they are perceived to be would be empty. For, if the thought of the validity of a judgment with contrary resided in a chain of justifications that comes to a close in a distinguished kind of judgment, then any thought of the validity of any judgment would always already contain the thought of the validity of these end points. No judgment, being the thought of its own validity, could ever be brought forth to justify, or to question, an end point of a series

of justifications. Such an end point would be a judgment that is valid in itself. The Myth of the Given is the idea that there are judgments with contrary that are valid in themselves. It is the idea that there are judgments that end a regress of justification. As we see that judgments of perception are subject to justification, we avoid the Myth.<sup>11</sup>

Judgments of perception, referring themselves to the power of knowledge, do not thereby exclude themselves from justification. They contain the idea of something that establishes their validity. In this way, the consciousness of the validity of judgments of perception provides for the possibility of judgments that depend on sensory experience, yet do so indirectly: judgments that establish the validity of judgments of perception. For a judgment that justifies a judgment of perception, as such, is internal to the latter and therefore equally depends on affection. Thus there are judgments that depend on affection not directly, as judgments of perception, but indirectly, as justifying judgments of perception. Let us call judgments that depend on affection, whether directly or indirectly, *judgments of experience*.

Since judgments of perception directly depend on affection, their reference to the power of knowledge contains the idea of a specific sense: I *see* that A, for example. Judgments that indirectly depend on affection contain no reference to a specific sense, but to sensibility in general. The *I think* of judgments of experience is the *I experience*; this is the power of sensory knowledge. The power of sensory knowledge is at work in, in the manner of being known to be at work in, every judgment of experience, specifically in every judgment justifying other judgments. The power of knowledge, far from providing an end point of chains of justification, is a prior unity of all judgments of experience, which are such as to be related as justifying and justified.

## *Chapter Eight*

# The Self-Determination of the Power

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### 8.1. The power of knowledge, and justification

A regress threatened as it seemed that I can comprehend the necessity of judging as I do in a judgment with contrary only by grounding it in something other. This is wrong. Judgments of experience ground themselves in the power of knowledge; therefore there is no regress and no need for end points. But now a different question—in a sense, the opposite question—arises. A judgment with contrary, in the thought of itself as resting in the power of knowledge, provides through itself for the recognition of its necessity. It seems not to require anything other in order to comprehend its necessity; specifically, it seems not to require justification. While we are thus no longer troubled by the question how justification can come to a close, we now do not see how it can begin. How can a judgment of experience point beyond what it judges, to something other, as its ground? It seems a judgment that springs from the power of knowledge must be content with itself.

We may want to say that, while a judgment of experience need not be justified, this does not mean that it cannot be. I can justify a judgment of perception, but I need not do so in order to be certain of its validity. I join judgments in chains of justification that I already recognize to be valid.



Now it is true that judgments joined in justification are already thought to be valid. But it cannot be true that the justification of a judgment is external to the thought of its validity. What justifies a judgment reveals it to be necessary so to judge—it shows it to be impossible to judge the contrary—and the thought of this necessity, and impossibility, is none other than the thought that the judgment is valid. Therefore, if the comprehension of the necessity of judging as one does in a judgment of experience were complete in itself—as it is in a judgment without contrary—it would be unthinkable that it should be given a justification.<sup>1</sup>

The power of knowledge, providing for the thought of the necessity of the judgment, seems to leave no room for justification. We know this is wrong. If it were right, judgments of experience would be without contrary. The power of knowledge must, precisely through the manner in which it provides for the recognition of the necessity of the judgment, ground its need of justification. Only if we understand how it does so do we understand how the invocation of the power of knowledge does not fall prey to the Myth of the Given. Only then do we understand how it resolves our original question: the question how a judgment with contrary can comprehend itself in a way that is adequate to its objectivity. How does the recognition of the validity of judgment as provided by the power of knowledge demand an articulation of this very recognition in justification? How does the division of power and act open up the space of justification?

## 8.2. The power of knowledge as *the* power

We introduced the power of knowledge as an instance of a general concept of power: a power is a concept insofar as it is the cause of the object of the concept. However, as judgment is self-conscious, the concept of judgment is not a concept, but *the* concept; as judgment is objective, the power of judgment is not a power, but *the* power. We need to reflect on the significance of this character of judgment for the manner in which the power of knowledge provides for the validity, or necessity, of judgment.

In order for a power to be something as opposed to nothing, the corresponding concept must not be empty. It must be possible to articulate the concept. An articulation of the concept is a description of the power. We describe the power of *Ns* to do *A* by saying how, in general, *Ns* do *A*. Describing the power of *Ns*, we say what it is—what it is for *Ns*—to do *A*; we expound the content of the concept of doing *A* as it applies to *Ns*. For example, describing the power of pear trees to bloom, we say how in general things go as pear trees bloom. Thus we articulate what it is, for pear trees, to bloom. A description of a power, an exposition of the corresponding concept, is as general as the power it describes; it is a system of general statements. Through these, we understand particular changes, or acts, that exemplify them. Hence such statements constitute a science, or part of one, a science being an ordered body of general knowledge. For example, the description of pear-tree bloom is a part of the science of pear trees.

As a power explains its acts in such a way as to explain their conformity to their concept, statements describing the power and explicating the concept specify an inner measure of perfection of acts of the power: a measure to which they are subject in virtue of being what they are. For example, the power of pear-tree bloom may explain why a given pear tree is changing in the way it is here and now: it explains why this and that is happening, in this order and at that time. Insofar as the pear-tree power of bloom explains the given changes in this given tree, what is happening here and now conforms to its inner measure of perfection and does so not per accidens. In virtue of springing from the power, it is as it should be, being what it is, namely, pear-tree bloom.

This idea of power we brought to judgment. Thinking my judgment valid, I refer it to the power of knowledge. Therein I think it to conform to its inner measure of perfection, to be as it is to be, being what it is, judgment. Insofar as the power explains my judgment, it is no accident that it is as it should be; it is no accident that things are as I judge them to be. My judgment is knowledge.

Here we seem to use the concept of judgment to determine a specific power, specifying what it is a power *to do*: it is a power—not to bloom but—to judge; the concept of judgment takes the place that was filled by the concept of bloom. As we lay out what it is for a pear tree to bloom,

we expound the measure of perfection to which the changes in this pear tree are bound in virtue of being what they are: pear-tree bloom. Conformity to this measure is no accident in changes that are explained by the power of pear-tree bloom. Now we speak not of the power to bloom, or the pear-tree power to bloom, but of the power to know, or the human power to know. The concept of knowledge supplies the inner measure of perfection to which acts that spring from the power of knowledge conform. As we lay out what it is to know, we expound the measure to which judgment is bound as judgment. By this measure we distinguish valid from invalid judgment, as we distinguish healthy from sickly bloom by what we know pear-tree bloom to be.

How does the concept of knowledge provide this measure? How shall we describe the power, or explicate the concept, of knowledge? The following may suggest itself: a judgment that things are so conforms to its inner measure of perfection if and only if indeed things are so, and not per accidens. That is, a judgment is knowledge if and only if it rests on a basis, or springs from a cause, in virtue of which it is no accident that it agrees with how things are.

It is true that this is an exposition of the concept of knowledge. But it does not specify a measure with which a judgment agrees as it springs from the power of knowledge. For, the concept of things' being as they are in terms of which we explain what it is to know is nothing other than the concept of judgment: it is the concept of the formal object of judgment, and the concept of a power and the concept of its formal object are but one concept. Our exposition of the concept of knowledge says nothing other than that a judgment conforms to its inner measure of perfection if and only if it conforms to its concept. An example may help to bring this out. Grizzly-bear food is the formal object of the grizzly bear's power of nourishment. Therefore it is a tautology that a grizzly bear eats in conformity with its power of nourishment if it eats grizzly-bear food. This is to say that its acts of nourishment are sound if they conform to its power, which is not to say anything about grizzly bears, but something about powers and their acts. It is the same when we say that someone judges in conformity with the power of judgment if she judges things to be as they are. Since things' being a certain way is the formal object of judgment, this is to

say that an act of judgment is valid if it conforms to the power of judgment.

If all we could say about pear-tree bloom was this, that it is pear-tree bloom, if all we could say about what distinguishes a healthy from a sickly pear tree blooming was this, that the former is blooming as pear trees bloom, while the latter is not, then it would be an illusion to think that we explain anything by speaking of the power of pear-tree bloom. And it would be an illusion to think that we comprehend the soundness of anything by referring it to the power of pear-tree bloom. For then the concept of bloom, and therewith the explanation of something's happening by this concept, would be empty. Yet as long as we say only what we said above about what it is to know, this is our situation. The concepts we used are concepts through which we think power and act in general; they do not delimit a specific power: an instance of the general concept of power distinguished from other such instances.

It is a tautology that a grizzly bear eats in conformity with its power of nourishment if it eats grizzly-bear food. We move beyond the tautology as we say what the grizzly bear eats: berries, say. Our description of the power of judgment includes no further specification of its formal object, and thus no further specification of the power. It is empty. This should not surprise. The emptiness of the concept of judgment reflects the objectivity of judgment. As the power of judgment is objective, it does not have a given nature. If it did, this nature would limit what can be apprehended in acts of this power and the validity of its acts would depend on a given character of the subject.<sup>2</sup> The power of judgment is not a given nature to be investigated as a limited element of what is. The concept of judgment is not specified through any such investigation. We acquire a more specific concept of the grizzly bear's power of nourishment as we inquire into grizzly bears and what they eat. There is no corresponding inquiry that determines the power of judgment.

The concept of knowledge is not *a* concept alongside other concepts. It is contained in the *I think* and thus in any concept. It is *the* concept. Therefore it does not specify what the power of knowledge is a power *to do*. It relates differently to the concept of power. Knowledge is judgment explained by the concept, that is, the power, of knowledge in the manner of being the thought of itself as springing from this power; the concept

is the cause of the act in such a way as to be thought in the act. This speaks of the act and its concept and their relation; it elaborates the concepts of power and act as they apply to judgment. So the concept of knowledge does not delimit something that a power may be a power to do; rather, it designates *a manner of power*: self-conscious power. The concept of knowledge has the same generality as the concept of power. The power of judgment, being self-consciousness, or the *I think*, is *the power*: the power that is nothing other than the concept of power.<sup>3</sup>

### 8.3. The self-determination of the power of knowledge

The concept of knowledge does not determine a general concept of power by identifying what it is a power to do. For it is not one concept among others. This may appear to deprive the explanation of judgment by the power of knowledge of meaning. In judging, I refer my judgment to the power of knowledge as its source. It is not a given fact that my judgment springs from this power. My judgment springs from it in the manner of being itself the thought of this power as its source. We may put this by saying that I judge not only in accordance with this power, but *from* my idea of this power; I derive my judgment from the power. However, there is nothing in my concept of knowledge from which I could derive a specific judgment, a judgment relating to a given pear tree, say. For, the concept of knowledge is nothing other than *the concept*. I receive no guidance in my application of a particular concept by thinking it to be a concept. In the distinction of judgment, the power, from judgment, the act, resides the thought of its modality that is internal to judgment: in judging that things are so, I think it necessary so to judge, thinking my judgment to be founded in the power of knowledge. Now this distinction seems to collapse. There is nothing there other than my judgment to which I refer my judgment, referring it to the power of knowledge.

It is true that we do not describe the power of knowledge in a way that specifies a measure of perfection when we say that knowledge is internally valid judgment. It would be rash to conclude that there is no description of the power of knowledge. The power of knowledge is

nothing given, but this does not mean it is nothing. The power of knowledge has no given determination, but this does not mean it is indeterminate. It means that it is determined by itself: the description of the power of knowledge is an act of this very power.

Ascertaining whether a judgment is knowledge, we compare it to the power of knowledge. To what do we compare it? A power is something general, its description, a system of general statements. So that to which we hold a judgment, holding it to the power of judgment, is given by general judgments. An ordered body of general judgments is a science. Comparing a judgment to knowledge is comparing it to a science. Science is what is known; it is *the knowledge*, as we may put it. A particular science is a partial description of the power of knowledge and a partial exposition of the concept of knowledge. We were misled when we sought an account of what it is to know in the idea that knowledge is non-accidentally valid judgment. Science, *what is known*, is the specification of *what it is to know*.

Referring a judgment to the power of knowledge is referring it to an ordered body of general knowledge. If the judgment pertains to a blooming pear tree, the relevant partial description of the power of knowledge is the science of pear trees. The science of pear trees also provides a description of the pear-tree power to bloom. The same system of general statements is a partial description of the power of knowing and a description of a power that is known. This reflects the self-consciousness of judgment. The thought of a judgment's validity is not a second-order judgment with its own special object. Therefore the science that delivers a description of the power of knowledge is not a special science: a science of cognition, cognitive science. The concept of knowledge is thought *in* the judgment that thus is thought to be knowledge. Therefore we understand the power of judgment in understanding what we judge. This is how the power of knowledge is not a power alongside powers: there is not, alongside the science of pear trees, the science of knowledge. The power of knowledge is all powers, or the power; the science of knowledge is all sciences, or the science.

A description of the power of knowledge is an act of this power: it is knowledge. A particular science, being a partial description of the power of knowledge, is knowledge and thus an act of the power it describes. In

this way, the concept of knowledge is not empty. It is determinate. We determine it, we determine *the knowledge* in knowing what we do. So we know what knowledge is in knowing what we do. We do not specify the power of knowledge through an empirical inquiry of a specific reality: certain “mental states” and dispositions. Then judgment would not be objective; its validity would not depend on its object alone. The specification of the concept of knowledge is the articulation of the self-consciousness of judgment. It is an error to think that therefore the concept of judgment has no content. It is an error to think that the self-consciousness of judgment is the mere form of judgment. It is in judging that we are conscious of the principles according to which we judge. As these are the principles from which our judgments spring, they determine what it is to judge. To think otherwise is to hold either that the true explanation of our judgments lies in something other than what we know to explain them *in* judging. Or it is to hold that, insofar as our judgments have a contrary, nothing explains why we judge as we do. But there is no such thing as thinking what these words—used in the way in which they usually are used—purport to express.

#### 8.4. Aristotle

A judgment with contrary distinguishes judgment from judgment: judgment, the power, from judgment, the act. We find this distinction contains a further one, of power from power: there is mere power, as we may put it, and power as determined by itself, power as its own act: science. Judgment with contrary contains a threefold distinction: power—power / act—act.

This is how Aristotle conceives the power to know. A specific episteme is a *first act* of the power of knowledge. This first act is power with respect to specific judgments, wherefore Aristotle also calls it *second power*. Correlatively, a specific judgment is a *second act* of knowledge.<sup>4</sup> Let us go through Aristotle’s idea of first and second power in the light of our reflections.

In *De Anima* 417a21ff., Aristotle distinguishes sense perception from knowledge in this way: knowledge exhibits a threefold contrast of first

power, second power, act; sense perception, by contrast, a twofold contrast of power and act. Here is what he says. There are three ways in which someone may be said to be a knower. First, a certain man is a knower because man belongs to the knowers and to those that have science; second, someone is a knower because he possesses the science of grammar; third, there is he who thinks and understands (*theorei*), who in the perfect and eminent way knows this specific A. The first two ways of being a knower are ways of being able to know (*dunaton*). They differ as a man is able to know in the first way because of the character of his *genos*, or matter, while he is able to know in the second way as he can, if he wants to, think about and understand something (*theorein*).

Aristotle defines first power by a certain mark, second power, by another mark. This entails that a second power does not exhibit the mark that defines the first power, the first power, not the mark defining a second power. So, as a man has the first power to know because of his *genos*, it will *not* be on account of his *genos* that he has a second power. And as, having a second power to know, he is in a position to know something (this A), the first power to know will *not* enable him to know anything.

Let us call a power, such as sight, that is not divided into first and second power a *simple power*. Then the point of marking the distinction of first from second power in this double way transpires when we consider whether a simple power corresponds to the first or to a second power. A power of sight is like a second power to know in that it enables the animal possessing it to see things, namely, those things that are visible to that kind of sight. At the same time, it is like the first power to know insofar as an animal has the sight it has on account of its species. We may express this, and Aristotle expresses it, by saying that it has its power of sight by birth. For, as an animal belongs to its species by birth, everything contained in its species it possesses by birth. We may also say that an animal has its sight by nature (*phusei*), for its species is its nature (*phusis*). So the two ways in which Aristotle contrasts first and second power indicate that, in a divided power, two things come apart that are one in simple powers: the character of a power as enabling her who has it to do what it is a power to do; and the character of it as possessed by her who possesses it by nature, or birth. The power to know



that a human being has by birth, by nature, by being a human being, is not a power to know any thing; conversely, a power to know some thing is a power that she who has it does not have by birth.

One may think it a curious power that does not put her who has it in a position to do what it is a power to do. Indeed, one may think it no power at all. Aristotle himself says in *Metaphysics* that what is power in the primary sense (*protos*) enables its subject to do what it is a power to do (cf. 1049b13–17). This leaves open that there may be a power that is not a power in the primary sense. However, in the *Metaphysics* passage just mentioned, Aristotle gives no example of such a power; specifically, he does not present the first power to know as an example. Thus we may be tempted to try to conceive the first power to know as a power in the primary sense after all. As Aristotle denies that it enables its subject to know any thing, we must give it something else to do. This is not far to seek: the first power to know is a power to acquire sciences, second powers.

It is true that the first power to know is a power to acquire sciences. But it is not therein a primary power, a power that enables its subject to do what it is a power to do. The first power to know is a power to acquire sciences, namely, a *first* power to acquire sciences. Just as the first power to know does not enable her who has it to know any thing, so the first power to acquire sciences does not enable her who has it to acquire any science. We see this when we remember the general concept of a power: a power is a concept considered as the cause of what is thought through it, a cause, therefore, that explains what it does in such a way as to secure that it conforms to its concept, and that is, the power. This fits with what Aristotle says about power in the primary sense: he says that, in such a power, the concept of the power is the concept of its act, and to understand the power is to understand its act. So the concept of the power is the concept through which we understand its act to be what it is. Specifically, the concept provides the inner measure of an act of this power, one by its conformity to which it conforms to what it is. Now just as the concept of knowledge provides no measure by which to judge the validity of a judgment, so the concept of acquiring a science does not provide a measure of an activity that presumes to be the acquisition of a science. Nor does this concept enable one to recognize what someone

is doing as acquiring a science (as opposed to, say, acquiring habits of nonsensical speech and confused argument). I recognize what someone is doing as acquiring a science as I know what science it is that he is acquiring. And it is the science that is being acquired that provides the measure of acts of acquiring it. The power to acquire a science, if it is to be power in the primary sense, is not the first power to know; rather, it is the very science that it is a power to acquire. The first power to know does not put its subject in a position to acquire any science. A power that does this is a science; it is that science.

The way in which Aristotle distinguishes first and second power entails that a power that, in the way in which its subject has it by birth, is power in the primary sense, is simple. Therefore, when we try to conceive the first power to know as a primary power, we misconceive it as simple. Suppose the first power to know enabled its subject to acquire a science. Suppose, that is, that the activity of acquiring a science sprang from the first power in such a way that its concept, the concept of acquiring a science, provided the measure of the activity and made it possible to recognize it as being that: acquiring a science. Then it would be wrong to distinguish a first power to know from the science so acquired. The power would be subject to maturation, which may take a long time and require suitable external conditions. This would not justify denying that an individual has the power on account of its species, or by birth. It would give no ground to divide the power into first and second power.

Where there is a division of first and second power, the first power is not a power in the primary sense. It does not put its subject in a position to do what it is a power to do. This is to say that the threefold division of power, power/act, act is not a sequence of two twofold divisions. The first power to know does not relate to its second powers in the way in which a simple power relates to its acts. While acts of a simple power spring from this power, a second power to know does not spring from the first power to know. The first power is not a power to acquire a second power to know; the power to acquire a second power is that second power.

If the power to acquire a second power is that power, then a second power comes from itself. And this is what Aristotle says. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103a, he distinguishes virtues and crafts (*technai*) from

powers like sight in this way: the former spring from their acts; the latter precede their acts. A power that precedes its acts is one that its subject has by nature (*phusei*), while those that spring from their acts it does not have by nature. (The same distinction is in *Metaphysics*, 1047b31–35, with “by birth” (*suggenes*) in the stead of “by nature”.) This is a distinction of primary powers, that is, powers that enable her who has them to do something. A primary power that its subject has by birth is a simple power; and when what the subject has by birth, or *phusei*, is not a primary power, then the primary power is a second power.<sup>5</sup> Neither the *Metaphysics* nor the *Ethics* identifies a first power that underlies virtues and crafts as second powers. But we can give it a name: it is the power to act, or live, well; it is the power to know the good.<sup>6</sup>

We said a second power comes from itself. Aristotle says a second power comes from its acts. This is the same. For, a second power comes from *its own* acts, acts of it, this second power, and therewith it comes from itself.<sup>7</sup> One might argue that this is impossible: a power cannot come from itself, coming from acts that come from it. For, one would have to have it in order to acquire it, which shows that one can never acquire it. Aristotle calls this argument sophistical, and responds that there is no first instance in which one is acquiring a science, just as, in general, there is no first instance in which something is moving; being in the process of acquiring a science, one has already acquired it (some of it), just as what is moving has already moved (some) (1050a).<sup>8</sup> And surely this is right: there is no first time when a child comprehends what she knows through general principles. Any judgment of what is, and is happening, here and now—second act—always already involves an understanding, however inchoate and vague, of how things are, and what happens, in general—first act.<sup>9</sup>

Aristotle does not identify a first power underlying the virtues. Yet he suggests that we bear a relation to the virtues by nature: we are constituted so as to receive and sustain them (*dechesthai*, *lambanein*). This constitution is the first power to act well, or know the good. By virtue of this first power, we are subjects of powers, acquiring and sustaining them, that are not *phusei*, but spring from themselves. We have seen how we must *not* understand this: the first power is not a primary power to acquire second powers. How then should we understand it? There is

an aspect of the *De Anima* passage with which we began that, so far, we have ignored. We represented Aristotle as saying that the first power to know belongs to a human being on account of her species. We put it thus in order to bring out the way in which the first power is like a simple power, which she who has it has by birth, or nature. However, Aristotle says, not that a human being is able to know in the first way on account of her species, but that she is so able on account of her *genos*, or matter. We may surmise that he puts it in this way in order to indicate the difference of the first power to know from a simple power: a simple power is a power to do some thing; the first power is not. A species, or nature, determines the primary powers its members have by nature. A *genos* does not. A *genos* is indeterminate with respect to the (primary) powers of its members. The indeterminacy of the *genos* is underscored by its conception as *matter*. Matter is what lacks determination. The first power relates to second powers in the way in which a *genos* relates to species. Just as the *genos* does not explain powers that define a particular species of this *genos*, so does the first power to know not explain a particular science.

As matter, the first power may appear to be passive, a power to receive second powers. However, a second power is through itself, and therefore acquiring a second power is not suffering something from something.<sup>10</sup> The first power is indeterminate, but it does not receive a determination from something other. The first power determines itself: a second power is the first power insofar as the first power has determined itself. Such is the *genos*, or matter, that is our *phusis*.

Aristotle suggests that a power springs from its own acts if and only if it is with concept, *meta logou*. “Meta logou” means “self-conscious”: what is *meta logou* contains the concept of itself. When we said a judgment conceives itself through its own concept, we could have expressed this in Aristotelian terms by saying that judgment is *meta logou*. Virtue is *meta logou*, as it is a *hexis* to act, not only *kata ton orthon logon*, but *meta tou orthou logou* (1144b): to act from virtue is not just to conform to virtue, but to act from an understanding of it. Therefore one does not act virtuously simply by doing what the virtuous man does, but only if one does it in the manner in which the virtuous man does so (1105b), namely, from the considerations from which the virtuous man acts and

with his comprehension of what he is doing. As virtue is *meta logou*, it contains its own *logos*; it is for itself its own concept. It is thought in the first person originally and is the first-person thought of itself. As Aristotle puts this: it is the man of virtue, *as* the man of virtue, who knows what virtue is.<sup>11</sup>

This explains why the power to know and the power to act well divide into first and second power: there is a distinction of first and second power in activity *meta logou*. A simple power precedes its acts and thus is something given. A self-conscious power, a power *meta logou*, is nothing given. The concept of a self-conscious act does not comprehend something given, something that is as it is independently of being so comprehended. Therefore a power to self-conscious acts can be determinate—there can be a determinate power to such acts, a power in the primary sense—only as it springs from its acts, thus springing from itself. The first power to know and the first power to act well are determined in acts of a second power, which acts develop and sustain this very second power. While a given power is a measure of its acts, the first power, being determinate only in a second power, is not a measure of its second powers. On the contrary, there are second powers precisely because the first power supplies no measure. The power of knowledge does not provide a measure by which to judge specific sciences; nor does the power to act well provide a measure for the virtues. The power to know and the power to act well have second powers because knowledge and virtue have no given measure, but *are their own measure*. The threefold distinction of power and act defines power that is not given; it is self-consciousness insofar as it is power and act. The threefold distinction is the structure of activity *meta logou*.<sup>12</sup> It is the structure of activity that is objective.

### 8.5. The threefold modality of judgment

We said the concept of knowledge specifies the general concept of power not by designating something that it is a power to do, but by specifying a manner of being a power: it is a self-conscious power, a power whose acts refer themselves to the power from which they spring. We now see

that this means that the concept of knowledge is the concept not of power and act, but of first power—second power / first act—second act.

In judging by means of the senses, I understand my judgment to spring from the first power, the power of sensory knowledge. For its dependence on sensory affection defines the logical form of the judgment; the dependence is contained in the *I think*, which therefore is the *I experience*. And I refer my judgment to the second power, or science, or *the knowledge*, in its justification. For a justification rests a judgment on premises one of which is more general than the judgment that is the conclusion. So I refer my judgment of experience, *as the second act* of the power of knowledge, *to the first power*; and I refer it *to the first act of this power*. Since this articulates the self-consciousness of the judgment of experience, I comprehend that *in* every judgment of experience; in every judgment of experience, I think the concept of power designated by the concept of knowledge: the concept of a three-fold distinction of first power, second power / first act, second act.

The power of knowledge is not *phusei*, but determined only as it determines itself. It follows that I refer my judgment to the first act already *in* referring it to the first power. Let us make explicit how I do so. A judgment's reference to the power of knowledge is the thought of its necessity: the concept of power sustains the thought, internal to a judgment, of its own modality. We may call this modality epistemic, as the power that underlies it is the power of knowledge. It is customary to distinguish two epistemic modalities, possibility and necessity. In formal treatments of the relevant expressions, "It must be so: . . .", "It may be so: . . .", their meaning is represented as invoking a special parameter with respect to which sentences containing it are true or false.<sup>13</sup> This parameter is called "body of information"; it may equally be called "body of knowledge". A sentence of the form *It must be so: A* is said to be true if and only if *A* is implied by the body of information, while a sentence of the form *It may be so: A* is true if and only if *A* is not ruled out by the body of information. In our terms: the thought of epistemic necessity is a thought of the judgment as included in *the knowledge*; the thought of epistemic possibility is a thought of the judgment as not excluded by *the knowledge*. Let us call a judgment I think epistemically necessary *apodictic*, a judgment I think epistemically possible, *problematic*.

We can—although we need not—express the conclusion of an inference, or argument, in this way: *So it must be the case that A*. For judging something on the basis of something is judging it in the consciousness of the latter as providing sufficient grounds for it.<sup>14</sup> The premises are the relevant aspect of *the knowledge*, which, in the conclusion, is recognized to include the conclusion. When we express the conclusion of an inference by saying *Therefore it must be so*, we make explicit the modality that belongs to it as conclusion of an inference. The modality of the judgment is self-conscious: it is understood in the judgment itself.

A judgment of experience is not always already the conclusion of an inference. We can call a judgment that is not the conclusion of an inference *assertoric*. An assertoric judgment is not without a thought of its necessity: I think it necessary to judge as I do as I refer my judgment to the power of sensory knowledge as its source. Therein I refer it to *the knowledge*, in two ways. First, I think my judgment epistemically possible: I think it to be *not excluded* by the knowledge. Secondly, I think it to be *such as to be included* in the knowledge. For I comprehend the first power to be such as to determine itself in a first act. Thus, referring my judgment to the power, I think it to be such as to rest in what this power is such as to be: science. As the first power is *the power to its first act*, the judgment grounded in the first power is *the power to be grounded in the first act of the latter*. An assertoric judgment is potentially apodictic.<sup>15</sup> Again, this modality of the judgment is self-conscious: in judging, I understand my assertoric judgment to be such as to rest on sufficient grounds; I understand it to be such as to be apodictic.

Thus we re-encounter the two ways in which judgments of perception lie open to justification. A judgment of perception excludes that there may be sufficient grounds for judging the contrary. This is to say it judges that there is nothing in the knowledge which proves it to be invalid; in a judgment of perception, I think what I judge to be not excluded by science. And what is known in a judgment of perception asks for an explanation. When it is explained, the judgment is apodictic, I comprehend its necessity in the light of what explains that which I judge; the judgment is the thought of itself as included in science. The judgment of perception includes the idea of its justification in these ways as the power of knowledge determines itself in a first act.

### 8.6. Side note on the epistemology, so called, of *S knows p*

The reference of assertoric judgment to *the knowledge* emerges in the strand of epistemology that takes it upon itself to identify conditions under which someone knows something. In order to begin this inquiry, an author must invoke examples of the schema *S knows p*, by reflecting on which he will judge the adequacy of a proposed account of what it is for someone to know something. These examples, being examples of someone knowing something, will represent her as thinking something that is such as to be known. (We are asked to consider under what conditions *S* knows, say, that Alfred jumped over a puddle, not that Alfred jumped over Chicago.) We recognize something as such as to be known as we bring to bear upon it our understanding of what it is to know something; what we are given as something someone knows must not be excluded as an object of knowledge by what we know knowledge to be. It must not be excluded by *the knowledge*. As we follow along the examples, we understand that what *S* is supposed to know is something that may be known. We understand that by consideration of the object that she is supposed to know; we do not advert to any given character of her, the subject, who supposedly knows it (which character is the sole concern of the author presenting the examples). As our understanding does not draw on a given character of the subject, but on that which she (supposedly) knows, she herself—the *S* who we suppose knows something—understands this, understands it in knowing what she does. Hence, in her assertoric judgment, she refers her judgment to *the knowledge*, comprehending it not to be excluded by it. As we suppose *S* to know something, this is part of what we suppose. Only because we do, do we comprehend the examples. There is an understanding of what it is to know that sustains the examples, an understanding that is passed by and remains uncomprehended.



## *Chapter Nine*

# The Original Act of Judgment

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### 9.1. Recapitulation: our question, our answer

The question that impelled us to deepen our inquiry into the explanation of judgment by the power of knowledge arose in the following way. In judging, I refer my judgment of perception to the power to know. In this way, I recognize its validity not through something other than what I judge. Yet my judgment is not on that account without contrary. It does not exclude the possibility of its justification: in a judgment of perception, I am open to the question why things are as I judge them to be, and I reject ostensible grounds that would show things to be otherwise than I judge them to be. This is how it must be. If a judgment of perception did not admit of justification, then it would be a judgment without contrary, and then it would be unthinkable that it should justify any judgment. As judgments of perception are open to justification, they belong to a manifold of judgments—judgments of experience—that are related in nexus of inference. While we saw that this is how it must be, we did not see how it could be. A justification expands the thought of the validity of the judgment that it justifies, yet this thought seemed complete in the judgment's reference to the power of knowledge. How can a judgment's thought of its validity be both complete, as it rests

in the power of knowledge, and incomplete, as it is capable of being justified?

The power of knowledge is not distinguished by what it is a power to do, but by its manner of being a power. As judgment is objective, the power of judgment is not a given nature, but self-determining: its determination is its own act. Therefore the power of knowledge is articulated, not into power and act, but into power, power / act, act. This answers the question. I think my judgment necessary as I refer it to a cause that secures its validity: the power of knowledge. However, my thought of the power would be empty and the distinction of power and act would collapse, were not the power determined. It is determined in its first act, science. Hence, referring my judgment to the power of knowledge, I refer it to that power's self-determination. I do so in one of two ways. My judgment may be grounded in a science, a first act of the power of knowledge. Then it is apodictic. Or it is merely assertoric. Then, thinking my judgment to rest in the power of knowledge, I refer it to that power's self-determination, thinking my judgment to be a power to be included in science. Grounding my judgment in the power of knowledge, I think it to rest on, or to be capable of resting on, the first act of this power; I think it to possess, or to be such as to possess, sufficient grounds in principles of a science. Thus it is precisely in my thought of my judgment as resting in the power of knowledge that I think it capable of being justified. This holds of any judgment of experience.

## 9.2. No complete consciousness of validity in judgments of experience

We need to see how my judgment's validity can be both complete and incomplete if we are to break through the appearance that we are caught in a regress of justification without succumbing to the Myth of the Given. Our answer is that the assertoric judgment of experience is complete as it refers itself to the power of knowledge, yet incomplete as, precisely in referring itself to that power, it thinks itself capable of resting on principles of a science. In this answer, we distinguish two senses of completion. The sense in which an assertoric judgment is complete is

not the sense in which it is incomplete. Conversely, the notion of completion through which we think an assertoric judgment *incomplete* is not the one we deploy when we describe this same judgment as complete. This may seem to be for the best, for, what could it mean for a judgment to be both complete and incomplete in the same sense? Yet we will see that resolving the difficulty by distinguishing ways of being complete undermines our understanding of the judgment of experience and its validity.

The apodictic judgment is complete in the sense in which the assertoric judgment, being complete in its way, is incomplete. An apodictic judgment rests not merely in the power of knowledge, but in a first act of this power, in which this power has determined itself. An assertoric judgment lacks *this* grounding; it lacks it in the manner of being an understanding of itself as lacking it. Thus it is the thought of its capacity to supply this lack; it is the thought of its capacity to be apodictic. Only in being apodictic does a judgment achieve itself, achieve comprehension of its own necessity. The sense of completion that belongs to the apodictic judgment is fundamental: it specifies what it is for a judgment to be what it is to be, to be lacking in nothing that, as judgment, it is to possess: recognition of its validity, necessity, objectivity.

However, there seems to be no such thing as an apodictic judgment of experience; the idea of completion through which we think an assertoric judgment incomplete is empty and no idea at all. We can see this as follows. A first act of the power of knowledge—a science—is, in relation to its second act, power: conforming to its concept, a judgment conforms to science. Yet in relation to the first power, the second power is act. Specifically, it is a judgment with contrary. For a principle from which judgments with contrary can be derived has a contrary; there is no such thing as grounding a judgment with contrary in a judgment without contrary. So no principle of a science is without contrary; principles of a science are judgments of experience; their logical form reflects their dependence on sensory affection.<sup>1</sup> As principles of a science are judgments of experience, what we said about judgments of experience holds true of them. Affirming a principle of a science, I exclude its contrary and thus think it necessary to affirm it. This thought of the necessity of the principle is a thought of it as resting in the power of

knowledge. And this thought is empty unless the power is determinate. Therefore, in the thought of its necessity, which is internal to my affirmation of the principle, I refer the principle to a first act of the power of knowledge, in which the power has determined itself, in one of two ways. Either I understand the principle to be included in a science: it derives from more general principles. Then it is apodictic. Or I comprehend the principle to be a power to be apodictic, I think it is such as to be grounded in a more general principle. Then it is assertoric. Science is such as to be grounded in science. Science grounds itself in itself as it reveals its principles to be grounded in principles, progressing toward ever deeper principles of experience, or nature.

This conception of a principle of science is internal to its use in justification. I comprehend a judgment of experience to be necessary as I ground it in principles of a science. As I so comprehend my judgment, I think it necessary to affirm the principle. Were I not conscious of anything in virtue of which it is necessary to affirm the principle, I would not exclude the contrary of this principle. I would not affirm the principle. And if I do not affirm the principle, I do not comprehend anything through it. Resting a judgment of experience in a principle of a science, I recognize the necessity of affirming this principle. So I do as I refer the principle to the power of knowledge. In doing that, I think of the principle as such as to be grounded in science.

It may seem that there are two judgments, one apodictic—the one grounded in a principle—and one assertoric—the principle in which the former is grounded. The former judgment is perfect in the thought of its necessity, the latter is on the way to this perfection. However, we saw that a judgment that is justified is not a different act from the judgment of what justifies it. Specifically, the thought of the validity of the justified judgment is not a different act of the mind from the thought of the validity of the judgment that justifies it: I judge *A* on the basis of *B* in the consciousness of the validity of judging *B*. Hence, if the one is not complete, but on the way to completion, so is the other. Resting a judgment on a principle whose necessity I do not comprehend, not fully, I do not comprehend, not fully, the necessity of the judgment I rest upon it. The two judgments do not each on their own take the step from assertoric to apodictic modality, first the one and then the other; rather,

the modal progression in the judgment that justifies is *that same progression* in the one that rests upon it. For, these are but one judgment. What holds for two judgments, holds for any number of judgments related in justification. They progress in one motion from assertoric to apodictic modality.<sup>2</sup>

It follows that there is no such thing as an apodictic judgment of experience. A judgment of experience is apodictic not through itself, but as it rests on sufficient grounds. But as the thought of the validity of the judgment that is justified is the same as the thought of the validity of the judgment that justifies it, the ground of a judgment confers on it no stronger a modality than it itself possesses. A principle of a science, as such, is a judgment of experience; it is a judgment with contrary. It is apodictic as it rests on sufficient grounds. And this dissolves the concept of an apodictic judgment of experience. There is no meaning in saying that to be apodictic, for a judgment of experience, is to rest on an apodictic judgment of experience.

If there is no such thing as an apodictic judgment of experience, then the same holds of a judgment's capacity to be apodictic: there is no such thing. And then there is no meaning in the idea of a threefold structure of the power of knowledge, its structure as power, power / act, act. In consequence, there is no meaning in the idea that I recognize the necessity of my judgment through the power of knowledge; no meaning in the idea that I comprehend the validity of my judgment of experience *in* this judgment; no meaning in the idea of a judgment of experience.

### 9.3. Ways of evading the problem; Kant

We might try saying that we must accustom ourselves to the fact that judgments of experience ultimately remain assertoric. We have learned to give up the striving for necessity in judgment; this ambition belongs to an outdated rationalist tradition. (It is a common practice to represent ideas such as this one with the air of heralding the intellectual progress of humankind.)

However, the thought of necessity of which we speak is nothing other than a judgment's thought of itself as excluding its contrary. It is in ex-

cluding its contrary that I think my judgment valid. Hence, the idea that I think my judgment necessary cannot be put down to, and enclosed in, any period of history. *It* has no contrary; it is something anyone always already thinks, thinks in any judgment. A judgment of experience excludes its contrary as it refers itself to the power of knowledge. And the idea of this power falls apart unless it is articulated in the idea of it as determining itself in its first act. The concept of an assertoric judgment—a judgment grounded in the power of knowledge—therefore *is* the concept of a judgment that is such as to be apodictic—grounded in the power as it has determined itself. If there is no such thing as a judgment's being apodictic, then there is no such thing as a judgment's capacity to be so. And then there is no such thing as an *assertoric* judgment. We no longer understand how a judgment can be necessary and explained in a way adequate to its objectivity, namely, by what it judges and no given character of the subject judging it. As we do not understand this, we do not shed an obsolete idea that we could replace with a more modest one. As we do not understand how there may be such a thing as an act whose validity is objective, we do not understand ourselves in the very activity that constitutes any understanding. We are beset with an incomprehension more complete or more thoroughgoing than which there is none.

It may be said that, while we shall never reach apodicticity in judgments of experience—we never *fully* comprehend the necessity of judging as we do—we can yet *approach* this *telos* and make progress toward it. Science is a power to ground itself in science, revealing its principles to be grounded in ever deeper principles of nature. The activity of science is nothing other than its unending progression toward ever deeper grounds of comprehension. Hence the judgment of experience is neither assertoric, nor apodictic. It is the interminable progression from the former to the latter. The dignity of science resides in this, that this progression is illimitable.

While this is an uplifting speech, it makes no sense. We do not understand anything as progress unless we understand what it is toward which it progresses. We understand something as approaching something only if we understand what it is that it approaches. Progressing is progressing toward something; approaching is approaching something. If the term that, in these phrases, takes the place of "something" is meaningless, then so is the phrase.

This may be thought to be too strong: the thought of an apodictic judgment is not empty; it is only that we are unable ever to arrive at such a judgment. The thought of an apodictic judgment humbles us in the recognition of this limit of our cognitive powers. At the same time, the thought elevates us, as we hold it up to ourselves as an ideal. It is precisely the impossibility of reaching it that makes the ideal so powerful, for it never ceases to propel us forward toward greater perfection.

Again, this makes no sense. More precisely, it makes no sense *if* the apodictic judgment in question is to be a judgment of experience. For there is no meaning in the idea of an apodictic judgment of experience. And an empty word is no ideal. So perhaps we should say that there is meaning in the idea of a judgment that is apodictic, but that this judgment, precisely because it is apodictic, is *not* a judgment of experience. In experience, we are guided by an ideal that cannot be realized in experience. We frame the idea of a judgment that, while being no judgment of experience, yet is the act in which the judgment of experience would achieve itself. In this judgment science has completed itself as it has perfectly grounded itself in itself. Hence in this judgment, in the completed science, the difference of first power and second power has disappeared. The power of knowledge has determined itself completely in an act of self-determination that exhausts it; the power *is* this act. Hence the completed science is an act of knowledge of nature that is without contrary. To this knowledge, any judgment of experience refers itself in the thought of its incompleteness. Yet this act of knowledge is perfectly other than the judgment that so refers itself to it. It is the act of an intellect of an utterly different character; indeed, it is misleading to call it "judgment". We may call it an original intuition, and the act of an *intuitus originarius*.<sup>3</sup>

Original intuition: this is the idea of completion through which, in any judgment of experience, I think the incompleteness of experience and thus its interminable progress toward completion. As this idea is nothing other than my thought of the validity of my judgment, it is nothing other than the self-consciousness of the judgment of experience; it is the *I experience*. Thus we are proposing that the self-consciousness of the judgment of experience—its thought of itself as objectively valid—resides in the idea of an intellect in which the formal articulation

of the *I experience* is dissolved. Indeed, this intellect, the *intuitus originarius*, is nothing other than the dissolution of the distinction of power, power / act, and act of knowledge. So in its thought of itself, we try saying, the judgment of experience thinks what is radically other than it, so other that it cannot be thought through any of the concepts through which the judgment of experience thinks itself. This is to say that judgment is the fundamental and irredeemable incomprehension of itself: it thinks itself to be what it is not, what it cannot be, and what it cannot know.

This is Kant's idea of judgment. He explains that any judgment is the thought of the completion of judgment in a whole of knowledge, which as a whole repels the idea of its being justified by something other. He insists that the idea of this knowledge is the idea of an act that is radically other than judgment, so other that our thought of it—the thought that yet constitutes a judgment of experience as a judgment—is empty. The judgment of experience comprehends itself as progressing toward this whole; the idea of this progression is internal to it as judgment, namely, as the thought of its own necessity. Yet the thought of reaching this end of judgment of experience *in experience* is empty. The whole of knowledge is the *telos* of judgment, in which it finally achieves itself. Yet this *telos* is an act that essentially rejects all the concepts that articulate the self-consciousness of judgment, all concepts contained in the *I experience*. It is plain that this account of judgment is incomprehensible. In a sense, this is no objection to Kant. His philosophy is the assertion of the ultimate incomprehensibility of judgment; it is that assertion explicitly and knowingly.

Kant states that the end of judgment is not a constitutive idea; it is not knowledge, or *objectively necessary*. It is a regulative idea, or *subjectively necessary*. That is, its necessity cannot be understood through its object—through that of which it is the idea—but only by appeal to a given character of the subject. The character of the subject in question is her dependence on sensibility; it is her being a subject of experience. The idea that the *telos* of judgment is not constitutive but regulative, not objectively but only subjectively necessary, does not render Kant's account any less incomprehensible. It places a contradiction—the thought that judgment is fully itself in an act that is radically other than it—in the



self-consciousness of judgment. It thus fixes judgment in an ultimate incomprehension of itself, in incomprehension of its necessity and its objectivity. Since judgment cannot be comprehended except through itself (on this point no one could be clearer than Kant), this is to lay it down that judgment is incomprehensible. This has the consequence (which Kant emphasizes) that the object of judgments of experience is not, not fully, not perfectly, the object of knowledge: *reality*. For, knowledge *does* comprehend itself. The object of knowledge is such as to provide for the self-comprehension of the knowledge of it. As the judgment of experience cannot comprehend its own necessity, its object is reduced to an *appearance*. (The idea that science, or judgment, is subject to a regulative ideal enjoys a popularity among contemporary authors that can only be explained by the supposition that it is not generally known that this idea is an expression of transcendental idealism, that is, the doctrine that we can know only appearances.) This is not the place to discuss Kant. The present remarks serve the purpose to make clear that Kant's thought provides no way forward, as it is the resolute insistence on the impossibility of moving forward.

#### 9.4. Completion immanent in judgment

Judgment, its thought of its validity, or necessity, must be both complete and incomplete. However, the completeness of the assertoric judgment—its resting in the first power—does not counterbalance its incompleteness, its lacking sufficient grounds in a first act of the power. Judgments of experience, as such, are incomplete. We sought in the power of knowledge a way to avert the regress of justification. But the appeal to the power is powerless. This shows that the completion of judgment cannot be a *telos* that, paradoxically, is comprehended in judgment to lie beyond it. Rather, the completion of judgment must be realized *in* judgment with contrary, *in* its ineliminable incompleteness. We must see how judgment with contrary—empirical knowledge, knowledge of nature—is, as such, judgment without contrary, absolute knowledge, knowledge knowing itself.

The judgment of experience is an interminable progression from assertoric to apodictic modality: a judgment is comprehended as it is

based on principles, which in turn are such as to be comprehended through principles, and so on. The power of knowledge as power, power / act, act is the principle of this progression; and the judgment of experience, in the thought of its validity, is the thought of this progression and its principle. As the modal progress of judgment is the development of nexus of justification, the judgment of experience is knowledge of the principle of inference. We shall see that, in the knowledge of this principle, judgment is complete: it comprehends itself, its necessity, through itself.

### 9.5. The concept of sufficient grounds and the logical principle

In justifying my judgment, I understand it to be grounded in the principles in which it is thus grounded; I recognize the relevant principles to provide sufficient grounds for it. Thus I recognize the grounds on which my judgment rests, thinking them *through the concept of sufficient grounds*. Moreover, I deploy the concept of sufficient grounds not only in justifying a judgment. In any judgment, I think my judgment capable of receiving a justification; I think it to be such as to rest on principles that provide sufficient grounds for it. Any judgment, then, in the thought of its validity, contains the idea of sufficient grounds for it, this very judgment.

The concept of sufficient grounds contains the principles of judging something on the basis of other things. It is the *Inbegriff* of the principles of inference. For it is right to judge one thing on the basis of other things one knows if and only if the latter provide sufficient grounds for judging the former. As I judge what I do so through the concept of sufficient grounds, my judgment of experience, as such, is a consciousness of the principles of inference.

Knowledge of the principles of inference is contained in the thought of the validity of any judgment of experience. For, in this thought, I refer my judgment to the power of knowledge as articulated into power, power / act, act. Thus I conceive my judgment as a term of inference: a second act actually or potentially grounded in a first act of the power of knowledge. So, any judgment of experience contains an understanding

of what it is for it to rest on something other. Hence, any judgment of experience, in the thought of its validity, is conscious of the principles according to which certain things justify judging certain other things. She who judges may not be able to put words to these principles, and when she sets out to do so, she may fall into confusion. Yet when she does articulate her understanding of the principles of justification, she makes explicit the very comprehension she deploys in judging one thing on the basis of another, indeed, in judging anything at all. The principles of inference are contained in the self-consciousness of the judgment of experience. They are contained in the *I experience*.

The *I think* is not a content that could be added to what is thought, *p*. A lucid notation would not write *I think* next to *p*, but form the letter *p* by means of the letters *I think*. As the principles of inference are the *I think*, what we said of the *I think* holds true of them. It is misleading to write up principles of inference as statements alongside other statements. A transparent notation would make the laws of logic legible in the graphic matter of any sentence letter.<sup>4</sup>

Inferring something from something is judging the one on the basis of the other. As inferring is judging, the principles of inference are principles of judgment. In this respect, they are like principles of a science. For these are principles of judgment: resting a judgment on a principle of science, I recognize that things must be as I judge them to be and therein recognize the necessity of so judging. Yet scientific principles differ from the principle of inference in that the principle of inference is contained in the *I think*. Knowledge of it is nothing other than the self-knowledge of judgment, or knowledge knowing itself. Knowledge of the principle of inference is without contrary.<sup>5</sup> By contrast, scientific principles are with contrary. They are not contained in the *I think*; knowledge of a principle of science is not the same as what it knows. Marking this distinction, we speak of scientific principles and principles of a science, and of logical principles and principles of logic, respectively.

A scientific principle determines the power of knowledge so as to determine what it is for a judgment to accord with this power. Considered as a determination of the power, the scientific principle is power, second power. Considered as grounded in the power, it is act, first act. The logical principle, by contrast, is an act of the power of knowledge that is

not distinct from the power whose act it is and therefore cannot be said to be grounded in the power. The power of knowledge is the structure of power, power/act, act, in the manner of being comprehended, in self-consciousness, to be this structure. Hence, the power of knowledge is nothing other than the comprehension of this structure, and this comprehension is the logical principle. Therefore we may call it the *original* act of the power of knowledge: in this act of the power of knowledge, that power is constituted as the threefold structure of power, power/act, act.

When we introduce, in addition to the first and second act of the power of knowledge, its original act, then this appellation may suggest a hierarchy of acts: original, first, second. However, the original act does not stand to the first act as the first does to the second. The original act of the power of knowledge—the logical principle—is the unity of the first act and the second act. It is the power itself.

We spoke of the principles of inference; and we spoke of the logical principle. The definite article indicates that the contrast of manifold and unity takes on a distinctive shape in its application to logical principles. As we ground a scientific principle in a deeper one, we recognize a unity of this principle, which we so ground, with others that are equally comprehensible through the same, deeper, principle. Scientific principles come on the scene as many; science progresses to apprehend their unity. This reflects the character of scientific principles as judgments with contrary, the comprehension of whose necessity resides in the thought of something *other* through which their necessity is understood. A logical principle, by contrast, is a judgment without contrary. Therefore it is always already thought through the unity of all such principles, which unity is the concept, or the power, of judgment: *I think*. There is no progression from manifold to unity; insofar as there is progress, it is the progressive clarification of an articulated unity. Therefore we can speak of *the* principle of logic, referring to the original unity of all logical principles.

It is not to our purpose here to articulate the principle, or principles, of logic. But it will be helpful to equip ourselves with a provisional idea of their content.

The first logical principle is the law of non-contradiction. It expresses the character of judgment as excluding its contrary. In any judgment

with contrary, I understand myself to exclude its contrary, and in this thought lay it open to justification. Hence consciousness of the law of non-contradiction is contained in any judgment with contrary, in any judgment that is such as to figure in inference. In this way, the law of non-contradiction lies at the bottom of any principle of inference.

Logic need not exhaust itself in the law of non-contradiction. Judgments with contrary are judgments of experience. These contain a recognition of their dependence on sensibility; they reflect their dependence on sensibility in their form. It is in virtue of this form that a judgment of experience is a term of inference. Hence, principles of inference may reflect the dependence of judgment on affection. Since judgments that depend on affection relate to an object that is temporal, principles of logic may articulate the temporality of the object of judgment. Hence, logical principles may contain concepts such as substance and accident, movement and its law, mechanism and teleology, and so on. These concepts articulate forms of dependence of one thing on another, in which resides the form of temporality of that which so depends, one on the other.<sup>6</sup> If there are such logical principles—principles that specify forms of explanation, or dependence, and therewith of temporality—they will not lie alongside the law of non-contradiction. As its dependence on sensory affection is a formal character of judgment with contrary, the law of non-contradiction, which is the consciousness of contrariety that constitutes judgment with contrary, contains these principles. If this is right, then it explains why the law of non-contradiction, as Plato and Aristotle note, carries all manner of qualifications such as “at the same time”, “in the same respect”, and so on. The fact that anyone always already understands these qualifications reveals that the law of non-contradiction is never apprehended in isolation from the principles that articulate the temporality and materiality of the object of judgment.<sup>7</sup>

This is an aside. We need not develop the principles of logic. It is enough that there be principles that are thought in the concept of sufficient grounds, the consciousness of which therefore is contained in any judgment with contrary, any judgment of experience, which refers itself to the power of knowledge as power, power / act, act.

### 9.6. Achilles and the tortoise

The principle of logic is the self-consciousness of the judgment. A way to see this is to reflect on Lewis Carroll's parable of Achilles and the tortoise. Achilles and the tortoise agree that  $p$  and  $p \supset q$ . The tortoise writes these statements down in its notebook as something it accepts as true. Now Achilles invites the tortoise to conclude that  $q$ . But the tortoise proclaims not to find in what it has been given—what it has put down in its notebook, namely,  $p$  and  $p \supset q$ —sufficient grounds for judging  $q$ . Achilles hastens to assist the tortoise, pointing out to it that, from  $p$  and  $p \supset q$ , it follows that  $q$ . The tortoise is happy to agree to this; indeed, it puts that statement in its notebook, including it among the things it accepts as true. Yet it finds itself unable to judge  $q$ , for it cannot see how what it has written down, namely,  $p$ ,  $p \supset q$ , and  $(p \text{ and } (p \supset q)) \supset q$ , provides sufficient grounds for judging  $q$ .<sup>8</sup>

This shows that, as one judges a conclusion on the basis of given premises, one's recognition that these premises justify the conclusion cannot be *a further judgment*, providing a further premise from which to derive the conclusion. She who judges  $C$  on the basis of  $A$  and  $B$  understands  $A$  and  $B$  to provide sufficient grounds for judging  $C$ . Yet her recognition that  $A$  and  $B$  establish the validity of judging  $C$  cannot be a judgment added to her judgments  $A$  and  $B$ . If it were, judging something on the basis of given premises would be judging it on the basis of these premises and a further one.

We said the logical principle cannot be a further *judgment*. But this does not exhaust the significance of the parable. If it did, we could conclude from it that the consciousness of a principle of inference is not the recognition of a fact, but, for example, the consciousness of a rule, or not an assertion that something is so, but the issuing of an inference license. But Achilles and the tortoise show that the consciousness of the principle according to which one judges one thing on the basis of another is not a further act *no matter of what kind*. The subject would have to conjoin any such act with the premises from which she draws the conclusion in order to judge  $C$  on the basis of  $A$  and  $B$ . This suffices to generate the regress.<sup>9</sup>

As I infer a conclusion from given premises, there is no act (no matter what we call it), in addition to judging the premises, in which I apprehend a logical nexus of premises and conclusion. This may be taken to show that judging one thing on the basis of another is *not* constituted by a recognition of the latter as providing sufficient grounds for judging the former. In the fundamental case, someone judges *A* on the basis of *B* as his judgment *A* in some way depends on his thought of *B*. That this nexus obtains is one thing; that he thinks that *B* speaks in favor of judging *A*, another.<sup>10</sup> On this view, someone may judge *A* on the basis of *B*, and yet, when we ask her why she thinks *A*, have nothing to say; someone may infer *A* from *B* without thinking of *B* as having any bearing on the question whether to judge *A*. But then we would not say of her that she infers *A* from *B*, rests her judgment *A* on *B*, etc. For these locutions represent her as being able to justify what she thinks. And someone who is dumbfounded by the question why she thinks what she does is not able to justify her judgment.

We may try pushing this aside. It is an observation regarding our manner of speaking. While we would not call this inference, it is a fundamental psychic reality. Indeed, this psychic reality underlies and makes possible what we call “inference”. This justifies calling it “inference”, or, if this should cause less offense, “proto-inference”.

Here we try saying that, in the fundamental case, someone may judge *A* on the basis of *B* while having no idea of *B* as a ground for judging *A*. However, if this is so in the fundamental case, then so it is in every case; the qualifier “the fundamental case” can go. If the fundamental case is as described, then in no case does someone judge something *in the consciousness* that the validity of so judging is established by that on the basis of which she judges. Suppose we describe a less fundamental case in this way: the subject’s judgment *A* cannot be traced to her thought of *B* alone, but to that thought of hers together with her notion that *B* speaks in favor of judging *A*. Now this may be true of her, while, when we ask her why she thinks *A*, she has nothing to say. We cannot, with the idea of a dependence of judgment on judgment to which the subject’s understanding of this dependence is external, introduce a primitive kind of inference, on which we promise to build something more like what we know, knowing ourselves to judge one thing on the basis

of another. We never recover what we call “inference”; we never recover inference.

Perhaps we must bite the bullet and assert that what we call inference is nothing at all. It is impossible and therefore does not exist. This is to deny the objectivity of judgment. We are speaking of someone who judges *A*, judges *B*, and whose judgment *A* in some way can be traced to her thought of *B*. It is irrelevant how that way is specified provided the following holds true: her judgment *A* may depend in that way on her thought of *B*, while she does not recognize *B* to establish the validity of her judgment *A*. This settles it that the way in which her judgment *A* depends on *B* constitutes a given character of her, the subject who so judges: a character one does not know her to exhibit in judging that which she judges. And if judgment is explained by a given character of her who judges, then judgment is not objective. It is not a consciousness whose perfection it is to agree with reality. And if there is no apprehension of reality, then there is no science, specifically no science of a given character of a given subject, such as a science of the brain and cognitive dispositions realized therein. Inferring something from something is comprehending the latter to provide sufficient grounds for judging the former. This is not a theory, it is not a hypothesis. This thought has no contrary. There is no such thing as rejecting it.

As I judge one thing on the basis of other things that I know, there is no act in addition to judging the premises in which I apprehend their nexus to the conclusion. It does not follow that judging one thing on the basis of others is not understanding the latter to speak in favor of judging the former. Rather, it follows that the consciousness of the logical principle through which I understand the premises to justify the conclusion *is not a consciousness different from and added to the judgment of the premises*. Nothing over and above judging the premises is needed in order to understand them as justifying the conclusion according to a principle of inference. The judgment of the premises is always already a consciousness of this principle.<sup>11</sup> This is what Achilles and the tortoise show: consciousness of the principle of inference is contained in any judgment that is such as to figure in inference. A judgment of experience is a consciousness of the logical principle and of itself as subject to it. If a judgment were not itself the thought of it as governed by the log-



ical principle, then it would need to be brought to the principle, and the principle to it. The logical principle would have to be applied to a given judgment. This would generate the regress. A judgment of experience is constituted as such in the consciousness of the principle of inference. The logical principle is the self-consciousness of judgment; it is the *I experience*.

### 9.7. The objectivity of the logical principle

The principle of logic is known in the self-consciousness of judgment; knowledge of it is self-knowledge; in knowing the principle, I know nothing but judgment. One may think that this shows that the principle is subjective; it constitutes the nature of judgment. It is not an objective principle; it does not constitute the nature of reality. This is an expression of the idea that objectivity and self-consciousness exclude one another: from the fact that knowledge of the logical principle is self-knowledge, it is inferred that it is not objective. It is knowledge of judgment, of the judging subject, *as opposed to* knowledge of what is, the object of judgment.

We come upon the principle of inference as we articulate the thought of its validity that is internal to judgment. I comprehend the necessity of my judgment of experience as I refer it to the self-determination of the power of knowledge: its first act, or science. In this reference to science, I conceive the scientific principle on which my judgment rests as providing sufficient grounds for judging what I do and thus conceive my judgment through the logical principle that is thought in the concept of sufficient grounds. Hence, if the consciousness of this principle is not objective, this infects the consciousness of validity of the judgment of experience everywhere. There is *no* thought of validity of a judgment of experience that does not pass through the concept of sufficient grounds. As we try thinking that the logical principle is subjective, a principle merely of the subject as opposed to the object of judgment, the idea of objective validity, and with it the idea of judgment, dissolves. Recognition of the logical principle as objective is without contrary: there is no such thing as thinking this principle to be subjective.

When we undertake to think that knowledge of the logical principle is not, as the principle of judgment, knowledge of the object of judgment, we conceive the power of judgment as a power among powers: an element of reality alongside others. Principles of inference are laws of this specific element: a given psychic endowment of a given species. And it is silly to infer the nature of what is *überhaupt* from the nature of a specific element of it. However, if the power of judgment were a specific element of what is, then judgment would not be objective; it would not be possible to explain a judgment by appeal to what it judges; a judgment could be explained only by a given character of the judging subject, specifically, the character of her power that is reflected in the principle of inference. And then there would be no such thing as knowledge of the power of judgment, no such thing as a science of judgment, for there would be no such thing as science and no such thing as knowledge.

### 9.8. Laws of being and principles of judgment

If the logical principle reflected the nature of a given power, so would any judgment. And then there would be no such thing as judgment. The logical principle is objective: it is the innermost law of nature, truth, being. If we recognize this, *and* are held hostage by the idea that the objectivity of judgment stands opposed to its self-consciousness—and that is the idea that the self-knowledge of judgment cannot be, as such, knowledge of the object of judgment—then we will try thinking that the principle of judgment, which pertains to the subject, derives from a prior objective principle, a principle of the object. First there is a law of being, which fixes what entails what. This law is objective in the sense that things' being as it says they are is not the same as their being known to be so. Dependent on this law is a principle of judgment that requires that one judge in accordance with it.

The notion that the objectivity of judgment resides in its being of something other than itself yields the idea that it is articulated into force and content. If judgment is so articulated, then a law of being is not as such a principle of judgment. As judgment is an attitude toward a content

that does not contain that attitude toward it, one does not, in judging what one does, recognize the necessity of so judging. Consequently, one does not, in knowing a law of what is, recognize the necessity of judging in conformity with it. Conversely, since I think it valid to judge as I do in so judging, I am, in being conscious of a law of nature, conscious of the necessity of judging in conformity with it: I am conscious of it as a principle of judgment. Indeed, inferring something is recognizing the necessity of judging it in the light of a principle of being: as *B* is the case, it is necessary to judge *A*. Inference *is* the consciousness of a principle of being as a principle of judgment.

Laws of a science are a partial description of the power of judgment: laws of a science, stating how things are and how they happen in general in a certain domain, are something on the basis of which I may judge that things are so and are so happening here and now, recognizing the necessity, or validity, of so judging. A law of the object of judgment, as such, is a principle of judgment. As such: there is no step from being conscious of a law of being to recognizing it to be a principle of judgment, and vice versa. Hence there is no resting a principle of judgment on a principle of being; there is but one act of the mind, understood in this act to be knowledge of a principle of being and therein of a principle of judgment. This is so because a judgment, as such, is the thought of its own validity. As such: there is no step from thinking that things are so to thinking it right to think that they are; there is but one act of the mind, understood in this act to be knowledge of things' being so and therein of the necessity of judging them to be so. As judging something is being conscious of the validity of so judging, a law through which I recognize that things must be a certain way is a principle through which I recognize the necessity of judging that they are.

A law of being is a principle of judgment because judging that things are so is recognizing the validity of judging them to be so. In this resides the objectivity of judgment: as a judgment that things are so is itself the thought of the validity of judging them to be so, its validity does not depend on any given character of the subject who so judges (a character not known in judging what she judges), but on what she judges alone. If judging things to be so were not, on its own, the thought of the

validity of so judging, then the validity of the judgment would depend on something not thought in the judgment itself. It would depend on a given character of the subject of the judgment; the judgment would not be objective. Hence, to think (or, rather, to try to think) that there is a distance between a principle of being and a principle of judgment is to think (or, rather, to try to think) that judgment is *not* objective. There is no space, not even for a notional distinction of the principle of judgment from the principle of being, which would be the space of a question regarding their relation.

### 9.9. The logical principle and scientific principles

The logical principle is the self-consciousness of judgment. By contrast, scientific principles are not contained in the *I think*; things' being as a principle of science states they are is not the same as their being known to be so. When we hold that the objectivity of judgment resides in its relating to an object distinct from the act of judging it, we will try to think of the logical principle as a species of scientific principle, a species distinguished by its maximal generality, perhaps: logical principles apply not to any limited domain, but range over everything. Notwithstanding its awesome generality, a logical principle is an objective fact, which is as it is independently of being known to be so.

In truth, this manner of expounding the idea that logical principles belong to science shows that they are contained in the *I think*. Logical principles are to be maximally general, or universal: they govern everything. This universality is the illimitability of the object of judgment, which reflects the self-consciousness of judgment. The concept of what is, which signifies the range of jurisdiction of the laws of logic, is the concept of the object of judgment. And the concept of the object of judgment is none other than the concept of judgment, which is self-consciousness. The articulation of the concept of what is, in laws that are comprehended to govern what is universally, is the articulation of the self-consciousness of judgment.<sup>12</sup>

Asserting that the logical principle is independent of the knowledge of it, we mean to hold fast to the idea of objectivity and necessity that

constitutes judgment. Yet we undermine it in this very assertion. If the principle of inference is not known in self-consciousness, then it is a judgment with contrary: it does not provide, through what it judges, comprehension of its own necessity. The principle is a brute unintelligible fact. And this unintelligibility is ultimate. For the thought of the necessity of a judgment with contrary is its thought of itself as resting on a deeper principle. As the principle of inference is ultimate, there is no such thing as a thought of its necessity. One may think this disconcerting: in the last principle of judgment we encounter a brute necessity to judge in accordance with a law we do not comprehend.<sup>13</sup> However, it is not disconcerting; it is unintelligible. If the principle of inference were a judgment with contrary, then it would not be not yet comprehended; it would be its essence to be incomprehensible. And then there would be no such thing as comprehending a judgment through this principle; there would be no such thing as recognizing the necessity of judging as one does to be established by the grounds on which one so judges. For there is no comprehending something through what is incomprehensibility itself. And if there is no comprehending why one judges as one does through the principle of inference, then there is no thought of the validity of judging anything at all. For this is the thought, internal to any judgment of experience, of it as possessing, or being such as to possess, sufficient grounds. Far from articulating the self-comprehension of judgment according to which it is objectively valid, the idea that the logical principle is a fact that obtains independently of our knowledge of it dissolves that comprehension, therewith dissolving judgment.

The principle of inference—the principle through which I recognize something to provide sufficient grounds for judging as I do—is no fact. It is an act: the original act of judgment. This act is nothing other than things' being as they are known to be in this act. In this act, thinking is being. This is comprehended in the consciousness of this act. The power of judgment, its original act, is the knowledge of itself as identical with being. The principle of judgment—the self-knowledge of judgment—is objectivity itself. It is all reality.

## 9.10. Historical remarks

This may be an occasion for some historical remarks, on Hegel, Frege, and Aristotle. The principles of logic, being the principles of judgment as such, are the principles of the object of judgment, as such. For judgment is objective. Since judgment is objective, the determination of the power of judgment is the same as the determination of the object of this power. We may denominate the attempt to think otherwise psychologism. When we do so, we understand why Hegel accuses Kant of psychologism: Kant distinguishes the self-consciousness of judgment from knowledge of the object of judgment.

Frege says any law of being can be conceived as (“kann aufgefaßt werden als”) a law of thought: a law specifying how it is right to think in the relevant area.<sup>14</sup> He does not say, any law of being grounds a corresponding law of judgment. There is no inference joining the concept of judgment and its principles to thought of how things are and why. This is so no matter whether the principles are scientific or logical. A principle of being, as such, is a principle of judgment. Frege recognizes this, as he insists on the objectivity of thought. Yet, he fails to realize that the objectivity of thought is nothing other than its self-consciousness. And therefore he essays to represent the objectivity of judgment through the distinction of force and content. In this way, he unwittingly destroys his insight that a principle of being, as such, is a principle of judgment.

In *Metaphysics*  $\Gamma$  3, Aristotle announces a principle—indeed, the first principle—of the science that he has introduced in  $\Gamma$  1 as the science of what is insofar as it is. In the course of the book, he expresses this principle in various ways. On the one hand he says it is impossible that something both be and not be (adding all the qualifications known from the sophistical refutations). On the other hand he says it is impossible to hold that something both is and is not. Aristotle gives no indication that he takes these formulations to represent different principles. Rather, his manner of writing suggests that he thinks it a matter of course, not requiring explicit mention, that these are ways of saying one and the same thing. It has been presented as a sign of the superior acumen of

modern philosophical thought that it has been able to distinguish in Aristotle's text two principles:<sup>15</sup> a principle of being, an ontological principle, and a principle of thought, a psychological principle. In truth, this is not a sign of the intellectual maturity, but a manifestation of the corruption of modern philosophy by psychologism.<sup>16</sup>

## *Chapter Ten*

# The Identity of Absolute and Empirical Knowledge

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### 10.1. Completion as incompleteness

The judgment of experience seemed constitutively incomplete: the idea that, *in* a judgment of experience, I should fully comprehend the necessity of judging as I do seemed empty and no idea at all. If it is, then so is the concept of a judgment of experience: empty and no concept at all. And then there is no such thing as a judgment of experience. Therefore we sought, in the judgment of experience, a recognition of its own completion. It would have to reside precisely in the judgment's incompleteness, that is, in its understanding of its incompleteness.

Thinking my judgment valid, I refer it to the power of knowledge and therein to a first act of this power. A first act of the power of knowledge is a principle on which a judgment, a second act, may rest. Hence, in judging, I think my judgment to possess sufficient grounds in this principle. In this way I comprehend, in my judgment of experience, the threefold structure of power, power/act, act and think my judgment through the concept of sufficient grounds. As the concept of sufficient grounds is nothing other than a consciousness of the logical principle, I am, in



judging what I do, conscious of this principle, to which I conform my judgment as I rest it on sufficient grounds. In this way, the logical principle is known in self-consciousness; it is judgment knowing itself. Therefore it is without contrary. It is valid in itself; thinking it is comprehending the validity of so thinking; thinking it is knowing oneself to know it. *This* knowledge, the original act of the power of knowledge, is complete in its thought of its validity. It is absolute.

We considered the notion that the consciousness of the logical principle is a representation merely of the form of judgment, distinct from knowledge of the ultimate principle of what is, or the object of judgment. This destroys the idea of judgment as objectively valid. The consciousness of the logical principle is knowledge of what is, which, through itself, comprehends itself as such. Thus it may seem to resolve our difficulty of comprehending judgment.

However, on closer inspection, it seems not to address our difficulty. We sought to comprehend how a judgment *of experience* can be complete in the thought of its necessity. But knowledge of the logical principle is not a judgment of experience; it is absolute knowledge. Even as there is absolute knowledge, which comprehends itself to be what it is to be, simply as judgment, this does not mend the insufficiency, which entails the incomprehensibility, of the judgment of experience. For, the logical principle supplies no justification of any judgment of experience; no scientific principle can be derived from the principle of logic. This is so precisely because the logical principle is without contrary. A judgment without contrary does not justify any judgment of experience. A judgment that justifies, as much as a judgment that is justified, has a contrary. Therefore, knowledge of the logical principle does not supply the lack from which the judgment of experience suffers; it does not complete the progression of the judgment of experience from assertoric to apodictic modality.

We already saw that if the logical principle *did* justify principles of science, it would complete science. Completing it, the logical principle would transform science into a judgment without contrary, and in this completed science, the structure of power, power/act, act, would have vanished. This may enjoin us to hold the logical principle separate from science and think of absolute knowledge as distinct from empirical

knowledge. But then absolute knowledge not only does not address our difficulty of comprehending the judgment of experience; it repels all concepts through which we think the judgment of experience. First, absolute knowledge—the consciousness of the logical principle—then is not necessary and does not understand itself to be necessary. For, the thought of a judgment's validity is the thought of its necessity only because and insofar as it is a judgment that excludes its contrary. Second, absolute knowledge then cannot be an act, specifically not the original act, of the power of knowledge. For it contains no thought of a distinction of power and act and therefore cannot be an understanding of itself as the power whose acts are judgments of experience. Absolute knowledge remains enclosed within itself, repelling any connection to empirical knowledge. If we consider what we now pretend to think in the idea of absolute knowledge, we realize that, instead of the fullness of being, we think nothing at all.

We face a dilemma. We go wrong as we think that the self-knowledge of judgment, or absolute knowledge, grounds empirical knowledge, or knowledge of nature. We equally go wrong as we think that absolute knowledge is an act of its own, untinged by the articulation that constitutes the judgment of experience. Either we think absolute knowledge completes the judgment of experience. In this case there is no such thing as empirical knowledge, for it is knowledge only insofar as it is transformed into a judgment without contrary. Or we think absolute knowledge is complete and therewith distinct from the judgment of experience, which is incomplete. Then absolute knowledge is empty and nothing at all.

In order to find our way out of this muddle, we must remember that the completeness of the judgment of experience must be nothing other than its incompleteness. We face the dilemma when we do not honor this insight. Occupying the first horn of the dilemma, we conceive the completeness of judgment in the logical principle as overcoming its incompleteness. But overcoming its incompleteness is overcoming its character as a judgment of experience. It is denying that a judgment of experience may be knowledge of what is. Sitting on the second horn, we isolate absolute knowledge from empirical knowledge. In so doing, we in effect deny what we found, namely, that the self-knowledge of judgment

is knowledge of what is. For unless, in my knowledge of the logical principle, I relate this absolute knowledge to empirical knowledge, I cannot comprehend the former to share the latter's object. Hence, if the judgment of experience judges what is, absolute knowledge does not. Or we say, as Kant does, that empirical knowledge is not of what is, but is only of appearances. Only absolute knowledge is of what is. Then what is, true reality, the object of absolute knowledge, is nothing at all.

As we try to separate absolute knowledge from empirical knowledge, we forget that absolute knowledge, knowledge of the logical principle, is nothing other than the self-consciousness of judgment. More precisely, it is the self-consciousness of the judgment of experience. The logical principle sustains the threefold structure of power, power / act, and act, of the power of knowledge, which structure is the thought of the validity, or necessity, of the judgment of experience. Absolute knowledge is nothing other than the thought of the validity of empirical judgment. As a judgment is nothing other than the thought of its validity, absolute knowledge is nothing other than empirical knowledge.

In the power of knowledge, there is a distinction of power, first act, second act. Reflecting on inference, we introduced a further act of the power of knowledge, its original act. As we pointed out, this must not be taken to suggest a hierarchy of acts: original, first, second. The original act is the unity of first act and second act; as such it is not prior to the first act, but equally internal to the first and the second act. Therefore the original act of the power of knowledge is not an ultimate act of self-determination. The power of knowledge determines itself in its first act, not in its original act. The original act is the—it is the self-consciousness of the—activity of self-determination of the power of knowledge in science and judgment. It is the whole activity of knowledge, not a special part of it. The original act therefore is complete in the manner of being incomplete: the comprehension of its own completion is nothing other than the self-conscious progress—the self-consciousness of the progress—of empirical inquiry.<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning of this essay, we contemplated the temptation to imagine that, in addition to thinking that something is so, one thinks oneself thinking it. One may postulate a tight connection, saying that these two things—that something is so and that one thinks it to be

so—are very close in consciousness: the one is in the foreground, the other, in the background; the one is the form, the other, the content. These metaphors obstruct from view the crucial point: that it is *in* thinking that things are so that I am conscious of thinking that. This is to say that my thinking it is *inside* what I think, as I think that things are so. The *I think* is inside what is thought. We fully appreciate the significance of this insight as we recognize that the self-consciousness of the judgment of experience, which is absolute knowledge of the logical principle, is not a distinct act from the knowledge whose self-consciousness it is, which is empirical knowledge of nature. Thus absolute knowledge is nothing other than the self-determining progression of the judgment of experience. Since absolute knowledge is nothing other than the ever-deepening comprehension of nature in science, absolute knowledge is not an empty, subjective form. It is the certainty of knowledge of being all reality.

We noted that, when absolute knowledge is isolated from empirical knowledge, it repels all concepts through which we articulate the *I experience*. Specifically, it repels the concept of necessity, for this concept signifies the exclusion of the contrary judgment by a judgment with contrary. By contrast, as absolute knowledge is the self-consciousness of empirical knowledge, and therefore *is* empirical knowledge, absolute knowledge is, and comprehends itself to be, unconditionally necessary. It is necessity itself, as it is the original act of, and thus *is*, the power of knowledge: any thought of necessity anywhere is such a thought of necessity only because it is the recognition of the unconditional necessity of the logical principle.

Nagel asserts that without thought that is valid in itself, the activity of science is unthinkable.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, we could not conceive science as progressing toward ever deeper comprehension; rather, science would appear to be a sequence of representations none of which is—none of which can be known to be—any closer to knowledge than the one that precedes it. Nagel is right. We now see how thought that is valid in itself sustains the activity of science. It does not do so by justifying scientific principles. And thus it may seem that thought that is valid in itself is an isolated island in a sea of representations that lack inner validity and thus are as baseless as they would be without this island in their middle.

However, thought that is valid in itself, judgment without contrary, sustains the activity of science as it is the self-consciousness of the judgment of experience, the consciousness of *its* validity, or necessity. Thought that is valid in itself—the logical principle—is the self-knowledge of judgment, in which judgment knows itself to be all reality. As science is this consciousness, science knows itself not to be empty and vain.

The second horn of the dilemma, isolating absolute knowledge from empirical knowledge, represents absolute knowledge as not only not absolute, but nothing at all. The first horn of the dilemma seeks to rest empirical knowledge in absolute knowledge, and thus represents empirical knowledge as, ultimately, not empirical; for resting in absolute knowledge, empirical knowledge is transformed into a judgment without contrary. However, absolute knowledge is absolute precisely as it is the consciousness of the principle of the interminable modal progression of empirical judgment. It is precisely as empirical, and with contrary, that judgment is articulated into power, power / act, act; and in this articulation alone, that is, in the consciousness of it, resides absolute knowledge of the logical principle. Hence its character as empirical does not separate empirical from absolute knowledge; on the contrary, in and through its empiricity, empirical knowledge is absolute.

*Science* seeks principles of judgment in which the power of knowledge determines itself. Its activity is empirical knowledge, judgment with contrary. *Philosophy* is the articulation of the self-consciousness of judgment; its activity is absolute knowledge, knowledge without contrary. The identity of empirical and absolute knowledge thus is the identity of philosophy and science. On the one hand, science, precisely as science, namely, as knowledge that is objective, and valid in virtue of its object as opposed to any given character of the subject, is philosophy, namely, absolute knowledge of the logical principle of the articulation that science bears as science. On the other hand, philosophy, precisely as philosophy, namely, as the articulation of the *I think*, as the self-consciousness of judgment, is science, namely, the activity in which the nexus of judgments in justification grows according to the principle of logic.

In philosophy, we articulate absolute knowledge, the concept of sufficient grounds, the logical principles of thought. The works of Aristotle

and Hegel are the unsurpassed achievements of the effort to articulate self-consciousness. Their work is different from scientific research. Yet it is clear that comprehension of this work is realized fully only in the recognition that the activity of science is nothing other than a contemplation of these principles in concreto. Conversely, the work of science is understood only as it is recognized to be the reality of absolute knowledge.

### 10.2. The speculative identity of self-consciousness and objectivity

The articulation of the power of knowledge into power, power / act, act constitutes the judgment of experience as an interminable progression from assertoric to apodictic modality. In this resides the constitutive incompleteness of empirical judgment. The very consciousness of this incompleteness, the consciousness of the threefold structure, is absolute knowledge. Hence it is precisely in the consciousness of its irresolvable incompleteness that judgment knows itself to be complete. In this way we comprehend the validity of judgments of experience without falling into the Myth of the Given.

In being conscious of its incompleteness, the judgment of experience comprehends its completion. In being empirical, empirical knowledge is absolute. As knowledge of nature, science is philosophy and the self-knowledge of judgment. In order to read this correctly, we must hold fast to the thought that the identity of these terms—philosophy and science, absolute and empirical knowledge, completeness and incompleteness of judgment, its satisfaction here and now and its interminable progress—resides precisely in their difference.

The idea of the completion of science (“the end of inquiry”, the last science) is the thought of an ultimate identity of empirical and absolute knowledge, an identity in which their difference has been overcome. It is the thought of a completion from which all incompleteness is excluded. It is the thought of the satisfaction of our desire to recognize the necessity of judging as we do, in which our striving for comprehension has come to rest. This idea is empty. Opposing this idea, we undertake

to think an original act of reason that is perfect in itself, pure, untouched by any difference and articulation. This is the thought of an ultimate difference of absolute from empirical knowledge, a difference that is no identity. It is the thought of a completion that bears no relation to any incompleteness. It is the thought of a satisfaction of judgment that excludes any notion of a distance from such satisfaction. This idea is equally empty.

Both ideas rest on the same thought: that self-consciousness and objectivity exclude one another. Judging anything at all, in the thought of the validity of judging as we do so, we reject this. Judging anything at all, we recognize the difference of self-knowledge and knowledge of nature to be their identity, their identity, their difference.

NOTES

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Notes

## 1. Objectivity versus the First Person

1. Wilfrid Sellars says experience “as it were makes claims”. John McDowell explains that this is a metaphor that casts experience in the role of a subject. It is a metaphor because an experience may make a claim that the subject of this experience refuses to endorse. Metaphorically, then, an experience is a subject of its own, distinct from the subject of this very experience. (Cf. John McDowell, “Sellars on Perceptual Experience”, pp. 10–11.) If Sellars spoke in the way I do, he would mean, in saying that experience makes claims, that experiencing something to be so is the same act of the mind as claiming that it is so. I mention this to make my meaning plain, not in order to say anything about Sellars.
2. I owe this formulation to Wolfram Gobsch.
3. *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 131. More precisely, he says that the *I think* must be able to accompany all my representations, for all my representations must be capable of being thought. This presupposes (what is the starting point of Kant’s philosophy and not the kind of thing for which he would undertake to give an argument) that the *I think* accompanies all my thoughts.
4. *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, § 20: “ungeschickt”.
5. The metaphors may intend to point to the work of philosophy: bringing to explicit consciousness in language what anyone always already understands, understands in anything he thinks, what, as Hegel put it, “uns in jedem Satze, den wir sprechen, zum Munde herausgeh[t]” (*Wissenschaft der Logik*, Vorrede zur

- zweiten Ausgabe). We shall be concerned with the nature of that work and to that extent explain the metaphors.
6. Which is not to say that it is not worthwhile to think about the artifact and the animal. Indeed, reflection on these concepts is essential to comprehending thought, not because thought is like an animal or an artifact, but because these concepts signify forms of thought and therefore are moments of the concept of thought.
  7. Or *validated* and *justified*; this distinction need not concern us now. It will later.
  8. Compare Gareth Evans, *The Varieties of Reference*, p. 222: “Any thinker who has an idea of an objective spatial world—an idea of a world of objects and phenomena which can be perceived but which are not dependent on being perceived for their existence—must be able to think of his perception of the world as being simultaneously due to his position in the world, and to the condition of the world at that position. The very idea of a perceivable, objective, spatial world brings with it the idea of the subject being *in* the world, with the course of his perceptions being due to his changing position in the world and to the more or less stable way the world is. The idea that there is an objective world and the idea that the subject is somewhere cannot be separated, and where he is is given by what he can perceive.” The idea of the subject and the thought that she is somewhere of which Evans speaks is her idea of *herself* and her thought of *herself* as somewhere; it is a first person thought.
  9. I do not understand why Evans calls the rudimentary theory of perception the “surrounding” of the idea of existence perceived as opposed to the articulation of this idea. Saying what it is to perceive something is the same as saying what it is for something to be perceived. It is not that the first surrounds the second.
  10. The self-consciousness of perception is crucial to Evans’s account of demonstrative reference in *The Varieties of Reference*. In virtue of it alone does perceiving an object enable the subject to locate the object and therewith to know of which object she thinks. At the same time, the self-consciousness of the kind of perception that sustains reference ruins Evans’s attempt to treat the first person as a variety of reference. It is possible that Evans saw this; the reason for it emerges in Appendix 3 to Chapter 6 of *The Varieties of Reference*, pp. 264–265. Very briefly, it is this. Someone refers to an object with “a” only if he knows to which object she so refers. And this she knows as she knows what it is for an arbitrary proposition ‘ $\delta_1 = a$ ’ to be true. ‘ $\delta_1$ ’ is an idea that identifies the object by its fundamental ground of difference, which resides in its place at a given time together with a concept that specifies its principle of temporal and spatial unity. Evans calls ideas of the form ‘ $\delta_1$ ’ fundamental, and calls thought trafficking in such ideas the fundamental level of thought. (Ernst

Tugendhat, in *Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die sprachanalytische Philosophie*, observes that asking, Which one?, is asking, Which one of all? The question and its answer refer to a totality of objects. [Cf. 21. Vorlesung, pp. 358–373.] The fundamental level of thought is the consciousness of this totality; it is the thought of *the objective world*.) However, a fundamental idea  $\delta_1$  is not empty only because and insofar as its subject is able to localize its object relative to herself, in a first person thought. Hence, every  $\delta_1$  contains the first person thought of the thinker. It follows that there is no explaining how one thinks of oneself in the first person by subsuming the first person under the above account of reference, showing how it picks out a particular object and satisfies the know-which requirement. (Cf. my “Self-knowledge in Analytic Philosophy”.)

11. In *Being Realistic About Reasons* (Chapter 1, section 5), Tim Scanlon represents rationality as a given character of the subject of practical knowledge, and represents Kantians as attempting, absurdly, to ground practical knowledge in this character of its subject. This criticism does not touch Kant because, according to Kant, the consciousness of the moral law—the supreme act of moral knowledge—is nothing other than the self-consciousness of practical reason. Therefore to know that which someone knows who has knowledge of the moral law—that is, to know the moral law—is to know her to be a subject of practical reason. Practical reason is not a given character of the subject of practical knowledge. Recognizing that the criticism does not apply to Kant allows us to give a more charitable interpretation of Kantians: they may be after Kant’s thought.
12. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, A 15, footnote.
13. In this regard, contemporary epistemology, since some time in the seventies, with notable exceptions such as, for example, Barry Stroud, Donald Davidson, and John McDowell, diverges sharply from any other period of philosophical thought.
14. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 133: “Die Vernunft ist die Gewißheit des Bewußtseins, alle Realität zu sein.” The consciousness, “Bewußtsein”, that is the topic of the Phenomenology is knowledge, “Wissen”.
15. See Andrea Kern, *Sources of Knowledge*.

## 2. Propositions

1. Compare Jennifer Smalligan Marusic, “Propositions and Judgments in Locke and Arnauld: A Monstrous and Unholy Union?”
2. This consequence of the distinction of force and content is succinctly stated and endorsed by Frege himself in “Der Gedanke”, p. 39.

3. Cf. John McDowell, “*De Re Senses*”, p. 222: “Frege’s troubles about “I” cannot be blamed simply on the idea of special and primitive senses; they result, rather, from the assumption . . . that communication must involve sharing of thoughts between communicator and audience. That assumption is quite natural, and Frege seems to take it for granted. But there is no obvious reason why he could not have held, instead, that in linguistic interchange of the appropriate kind, mutual understanding—which is what successful communication achieves—requires not shared thoughts but different thoughts that, however, stand and are mutually known to stand in a suitable relation of correspondence.”
4. I am grateful to Adrian Haddock for illumination on this point. Cf. also Michael Thompson, “You and I”.
5. It is natural to include a location, to accommodate sentences using “here”. It is customary to add a world. However, it is not possible to motivate the inclusion of a world in a context of use in the manner above. There are people who will say, *She who uses the sentence “Phosphorus melts at 55 degree Celsius” concerns herself with the world of this very use of the sentence*. However, outside a semantic theory that postulates things that are true at worlds that statement is incomprehensible. Therefore it cannot motivate such a theory. In fact, the motivation for the inclusion of a world in the context of use comes from a certain treatment of modality, which rests on the (false) notion that modal terms are sentential operators.
6. Once we have introduced the idea of a proposition that is true at a context, we can frame the idea of operators that shift features of the context: the truth value at a context of a sentence that results from the application of such an operator to a given sentence depends on the truth value of that sentence at a context, or contexts, that differ from the former one with respect to a certain feature in a determinate way, which way is indicated by the operator. (The implementation of this idea requires further technical refinements that are of no interest here.) For example, we may propose that a past-tense sentence results from the application of an operator to a given sentence; the resulting sentence is true at a given context if and only if the sentence to which the operator has been applied is true at a context that differs from the given one with respect to its time in this way: its time is earlier. If the idea of a proposition that is true at a context is unsound, then there are no such operators. This is all to the good because it seems obvious that the aspects of logical form that are most popularly represented by such operators, namely modality and tense, cannot be represented in this way. (For discussion of tense see my *Categories of the Temporal*, chap. 4.) As to the manifold other features of context that have recently been proposed, we should be all the more happy to dispense with them.
7. David Lewis, “Index, Context and Content”, p. 22: “The foremost thing we do with words is impart information, and this is how we do it. . . . I will find something to say that depends for its truth on whether A or B or . . . and that I take

to be true. I will say it and you will hear it. You, trusting me to be willing and able to tell the truth, will then be in a position to infer whether A or B or . . .” Later Lewis explains that, more precisely, I will find something to say that depends for its truth-in-English on A or B or . . . (p. 23), and that truth-in-English depends “on features of the situation in which the words are used” (p. 24). So I will find something to say whose truth-in-English in the situation in which I say it depends on A or B or . . .

8. [It is right to assert [I am hungry] in the context in which I am asserting it] is true relative to all and only the contexts relative to which [I am hungry] is true. This does not show that what someone thinks, thinking she is right to assert [I am hungry], is [It is right to assert [I am hungry] in the context in which I am asserting it]. For unless what she thinks picks out a context, it does not specify a condition under which it is correct to assert a c-proposition. And [It is right to assert [I am hungry] in the context in which I am asserting it] does not pick out a context. (I am grateful to John MacFarlane for illuminating conversation about this matter. He may well remain discontent with what I have made of it.)
9. Perhaps it is helpful to represent the dialectic running through the preceding and the present section in this way. When the Fregean asserts that she who thinks a Fregean first-person proposition understands the relation of what she thinks to what someone else thinks who thinks about her, he attempts to include, in the subject’s understanding, the generality of the rule that is encapsulated in the c-proposition. This cannot work because the first-person proposition does not provide for the comprehension of this generality. Conversely, the theory of c-propositions, placing the generality of the rule in the consciousness of her who thinks a first-person thought, cannot represent how the subject brings that rule to—not someone or other, but—herself.
10. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI, 1144b.
11. *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, pp. 397ff.
12. That the topic of Wittgenstein’s reflections on rule-following in *Philosophische Untersuchungen* is self-consciousness is implicit in much illuminating interpretive work on those passages. The only discussion of which I am aware in which it is explicit that this is the difficulty is G. E. M. Anscombe’s, in “Rules, Rights, and Promises”.
13. In “Self-Consciousness, Negation, and Disagreement”, I discuss how the force-content distinction renders incomprehensible negation and disagreement.

### 3. Denial of Self-Consciousness

1. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* § 251, suggests that it is the defining mark of “grammatical sentences”, which are the province of philosophical reflection, to be without contrary.

2. Today it may well seem to her who enters philosophy that the first thing that one must do to succeed as a philosopher is to equip oneself with a view. This reflects economic pressures. It is one of the reasons why the illusion can arise that, in philosophy, there are many views.
3. Cf. St. Thomas, *Quaestiones de veritate*, quaestio 1, articulus nonus: “In intellectu enim [veritas] est sicut . . . cognita per intellectum . . . cognoscitur autem ab intellectu secundum quod intellectus reflectitur super actum suum, non solum secundum quod cogniscit actum suum sed secundum quod cogniscit proportionum eius ad rem, quae quidem cognisci non potest nisi cognita natura ipsius actus, quae cognosci non potest nisi natura principii activi cognoscatur, quod est ipse intellectus. . . . unde secundum hoc cogniscit veritatem intellectus quod supra se ipsum reflectitur.”
4. See my “Autonomy and Education”.
5. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Prima Pars Secundae Partis, Quaestio 1, Articulus 2.
6. Cf. my “Self-Consciousness and Knowledge”.

#### 4. The Science without Contrary

1. *Metaphysics* Γ, 1003a21ff.
2. *De Partibus Animalium*, I 1, 641a10ff. Cf. *De Anima*, Book III, 429a.
3. A philosopher will be grateful for the abundance of terms that ordinary language provides for the object of judgment. For she may want to mark distinctions within (the consciousness of) this object and make use of the various ordinary terms to mark these. (Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, Die Lehre vom Begriff, p. 130.) However, the manifold of terms should not suggest to the philosopher that he can explain one of these terms by means of another. Adrian Moore writes: “There is only one world. This is what I mean when I talk about the unity of reality” (*Points of View*, p. 22). No light is shed on what is said in “reality is one” by replacing “reality” by “the world”. The assonances of these words may differ and thus perhaps unity is more clearly heard in “the world” than it is in “reality” (and be it only because “world” admits the definite article). Even if this is so, we shall not comprehend what it means that reality, the world, being, or what have you, is one, indeed, is unity itself, unless we reflect on the character that the object of judgment possesses as the object of judgment. We shall not understand it, that is, unless we undertake to articulate the self-consciousness of judgment.
4. It may be held that a judgment can be true or false, and that therefore the object of judgment is not what is, but rather what either is or is not. (This alleged object then is called, for example, “proposition”, or “state of affairs”.) But this is not so. In judging, I take my judgment to be valid. So in judging, I think of

what I judge as something that is. I do not think of it as something that is or is not. “So it is” expresses a judgment. “So it is, or not” does not.

5. This line of thought is ancient.
6. Compare G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Einleitung, p. 63: “Das Bewußtsein aber ist für sich selbst sein Begriff, dadurch unmittelbar das Hinausgehen über das Beschränkte, und, da ihm dies Beschränkte angehört, über sich selbst.” Cf. my discussion of Plato’s dictum that the soul apprehends being not through an organ, but through itself in “Review of Transcendental Philosophy and Naturalism”.
7. This is the basis of Adrian Moore’s “Fundamental Principle”, which expresses our recognition of the unity of reality: “Given any pair of two true representations, it is possible to produce a true representation that weakly entails each of them” (*Points of View*, p. 21). Justifying this principle, Moore writes: “So given any pair of true representations, that one world—reality—must be how both of them represent it as being. But if that is how reality is, then it must be possible to produce a true representation to this effect.” And here is how we realize that we are bound to this principle: “Suppose that I wish to endorse my own representations . . . And suppose that I wish to do so in a way that is fully and rationally reflective. Then I shall not be satisfied except in so far as I am satisfied that these representations conform to the Fundamental Principle” (*Points of View*, p. 22). So in endorsing my judgment (in endorsing it “fully and rationally reflectively”, or “fully self-consciously”), that is, in judging, I conceive the object of my judgment to be: the world, reality, what is, or, as we said, the object *überhaupt*. Whatever I judge, the object of my judgment is *the world*. “This is how the world is”, I say, no matter what I say. As this is the basis of my consciousness of the unity of the world, the unity of the world is none other than the unity of self-consciousness, the *I think*.
8. If animal perception is not self-conscious. I leave this open.
9. The talk of standpoints and the idea that the first person, or self-consciousness, is such a thing, a specific standpoint, to be distinguished from another standpoint, the one of the third person, is widespread. (A lucid exposition of the idea is Richard Moran, *Authority and Estrangement*.) This reflects a recognition that something goes missing when we conceive ourselves and our activity as a given reality. Yet, as long as we do not reflect on the nexus of objectivity and self-consciousness, we shall be unable to hinder the concepts of objectivity and knowledge from attaching to the third-person standpoint.

## 5. Objective Judgment in Nagel and Moore

1. Two terminological remarks on Adrian Moore. First, he speaks of “representations”. The relevant representations are those we “produce” and “accept as



true”. Therefore I speak of judgment. Second, Moore distinguishes objective from absolute judgment in this way: an absolute judgment is independent of any point of view, an objective judgment is independent of any “point of involvement”. A point of involvement is a point of view defined by “concerns, interests, or values” (*Points of View*, p. 4). As this distinction is irrelevant to our discussion, I shall ignore it and use “objective” in place of Moore’s “absolute”.

2. “My judgment that things are so is made true by reality” may be said to be a forceful, even bullying, way to express this judgment. Or “reality” may be said to be a part of a prosentence, suitable to be bound by a corresponding quantifier. (Cf. Grover, Camp, Belnap: “A Prosentential Theory of Truth”.)
3. “There is a question—a basic question—about how much of substance underpins the truisms [such as “reality is what representations answer to”, “it is reality that determines whether representations are true or false”, “no representation is true unless reality makes it so”, SR]; how far, for example, our concept of reality is a concept of anything, rather than mere linguistic fluff. We have a sense that there is something very substantial underpinning the truisms. In saying that representations answer to reality, we mean precisely that there is something, reality, to which representations answer, something which is how all true representations represent it as being” (*Points of View*, pp. 38–39). The passage continues: “But suppose now that it is impossible to form a determinate conception of this reality that is not just one more set of perspectival representations. How then are we to maintain any sense that our concept of reality is more than linguistic fluff? Unless we can be sure that there is some privileged account of what reality is like, how can we be sure that there is ultimately anything other than the representations, and the various techniques of indirect integration that are severally applied to them?”
4. A judgment from a point of view is one whose *content* depends on its point of view. (*Points of View*, p. 3: “This unremarkable fact in fact illustrates the way in which the content of a true judgment can depend quite literally on its location.” *Points of View*, p. 4: “An *objective* judgment is a judgment whose content does not depend on what I have been calling ‘a point of involvement.’”) And: “The content of a representation is how things must be if it is true” (*Points of View*, p. 10).
5. Cf. *Points of View*, chap. 1, § 1.
6. Cf. *Points of View*, p. 5.
7. “The pressure to make an objective advance comes . . . from the incapacity of the earlier view of the world to include and explain itself—that is, to explain why things appear to us as they do” (Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, p. 76).
8. The parallel to the kind of semantics that speaks of contents that are true relative to a context is instructive. The relevant treatment of tense and spatial indexicals represents what is judged in using the relevant sentences as true

relative to the time provided by the context of the utterance. The meta-language in which the judgment is evaluated expresses a transcending judgment: it is stipulated to provide for a non-indexical representation of all locations in space and time; hence the evaluation in the meta-language is not in turn evaluated relative to a time and place. The extension of this way of thinking to our visual system may seem a stretch, but only because we are not likely to encounter beings that use our words and do not share our visual system. We can easily think up such beings and treat utterances of “grass is green” as true relative to a visual system provided by the context: the visual system of her who speaks. The extension to ethical values enjoys some popularity; here we can include a system of values or ultimate ends as a feature of context. It may be argued that the context does not provide such a system. Then the judgment will not involve the idea of itself as representing reality. It will be given an expressivist account.

9. “In the case of an absolute representation, fully self-conscious endorsement can be achieved by simple repetition” (*Points of View*, p. 13). What is repeated are the words used to express the judgment. As saying the same thing twice is to repeat not the judgment, but its expression, the fully self-conscious endorsement of a judgment is—not the repetition of the judgment, but—the judgment.
10. Arguably, an account that, in the manner envisaged by Moore, shows how a judgment from a point of view is made true by reality provides an explanation why reality is represented as it is in this judgment. We need not resolve this interpretive issue.
11. *Points of View*, p. 74.
12. Moore and Nagel generously use the morpheme “self” in their descriptions of the judgment that consummates the objectivity of judgment. This is an intimation of the thought that is the topic of this book: knowledge of something other is knowledge only because it is self-knowledge. Neither Nagel nor Moore inquires into the logical character of *self*-judgment, *self*-knowledge, *self*-comprehension.
13. Nagel appears to see this in *Mind and Cosmos*, in his account of rational knowledge as explained by what it knows alone (op. cit., p. 83). Nagel recognizes there that this renders impossible an evolutionary account of the emergence of reason. It is puzzling that, in the same book, he continues to speculate about a possible science—different from evolutionary biology in containing principles of natural teleology—that might explain the emergence of reason. For his reflections show not just the impossibility of an evolutionary account, but that of a natural scientific account.

It should not be surprising that there is no such thing as a science of the emergence of science (which would need to represent what emerges *as science*, that is,

- as knowledge of what is). The idea of such a thing should be patently absurd. Nagel's weaker claim (that there is no evolutionary account of science), which has raised such violent opposition, should be routine, and a starting point.
14. It has been proposed that the results of neuroscience must be supplemented with the kind of introspective acquaintance with consciousness that is provided by disciplined meditation. As this idea is innovative and breaks new ground, it is fitting that it should receive ample funding, enabling philosophers to attend advanced yoga classes and meditation workshops. Indeed, the idea must be praised for registering the evident mismatch of promise and delivery. Yet, the notion that self-comprehension that is episteme (Wissenschaft) could result from amalgamating a form of episteme from which the first person is expelled with a form of spiritual activity that is incapable of rigorous conceptual articulation is bizarre.
  15. *The View from Nowhere*, p. 68.
  16. *The View from Nowhere*, p. 83.
  17. "... the point is made by Stroud . . . It applies equally to a possible rationalist theory of the mind's capacity for a priori theorizing" (*The View from Nowhere*, p. 85).
  18. Cf. Annette Baier, "The True Idea of God".
  19. In *Mind and Cosmos*, Nagel advances a more satisfying thought: reason comprehends itself as a power of knowledge *through itself*; there is nothing, neither God, nor a property of the natural order, that accounts for the agreement of reason with reality. Nagel expresses this by saying that reason's relation to the truth is direct (op. cit., pp. 82ff.). He explains what he means as follows: in a judgment that is valid in itself, what is judged, on its own and through itself, without mediation by any third item, explains why it is judged: *p* explains why I think *p*. This entails that the judgment in question has no contrary and is nothing other than the self-consciousness of judgment. For, if *p* explains, on its own and through itself, why it is known, then she who thinks *p* knows, in and through thinking this, why she thinks it. Hence, if there were a contrary of *p*, thinking it would be knowing why one does not think it. Nagel gives the law of non-contradiction as an example of a thought that is valid in itself. (*Mind and Cosmos*, p. 83: "I see that the contradictory beliefs cannot all be true, and I see it simply because it is the case.") This law differs radically from the fantasy of a last science in *The View from Nowhere*. Thought that is valid in itself is not an end that we have no idea how to reach. It is real and at work here and now. This is the topic and *telos* of the present book.
  20. Moore takes it that Hilary Putnam has shown this. See *Points of View*, p. 88: "What Putnam's argument shows is that it is impossible to exercise the *concept* of a representation except in accord with some outlook. . . . He has not shown that any outlook must be Perspectival [yield perspectival representa-

tions; cf. p. 83; SR], only that this is so for any outlook involved in reflecting on the truth of a representation.”

21. Compare John McDowell’s discussion in “Aesthetic Value, Objectivity, and the Fabric of the World”, especially § 4, and fn. 13, of the text that inspired Moore’s *Points of View*, namely, Bernard Williams, *Descartes. The Project of Pure Inquiry*, introducing the idea of “the absolute conception of reality”.
22. Cf. *Points of View*, p. 190: “It is as if maximum self-consciousness required the disappearance of the self. The idea does begin to look like an impossible, merely regulative ideal.”
23. Compare G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Introduction, p. 58: “Sollte das Absolute durch das Werkzeug uns nur überhaupt näher gebracht werden, ohne etwas an ihm zu verändern, wie etwa durch die Leimrute der Vogel, so würde es wohl, wenn es nicht an und für sich schon bei uns wäre und sein wollte, dieser List spotten; denn eine List wäre in diesem Falle das Erkennen, da es durch sein vielfaches Bemühen ganz etwas anderes zu treiben sich Miene gibt, als nur die unmittelbare und somit mühelose Beziehung hervor zu bringen.” The knowledge busying itself with transcending its point of view is a fine example of an attempt to invent a Leimrute to catch the Absolute. (My translation: “Were the instrument merely to bring the absolute nearer to us, without changing anything about it, as the twig covered with birdlime does the bird, then the absolute surely would cast scorn on this ruse, if it were not already with us and wanted to be; for knowledge in this case would be a ruse, as, through its manifold efforts, it pretends to do something completely different from bringing about the immediate and therefore effortless relation.”)
24. We need to bring it within the scope of spontaneity. (Cf. John McDowell, “Hegel’s Idealism as a Radicalization of Kant”, p. 80.)
25. In the words of Jonathan Lear: we need to comprehend a form of reflective consciousness that does not *look down* upon itself. Nagel’s and Moore’s transcendence is a reflective consciousness that looks down upon itself. Once we have fixed it that reflective consciousness can only look down upon itself, the impossibility of bringing knowledge and self-consciousness together is a matter of course. Thus we declare impossible what we are. “The Disappearing We”, pp. 241–242: “If our representations have objective validity, then one will not be able to continue *looking down* upon them: *that* sort of reflective consciousness must ultimately evaporate. . . . It is not obvious, however, that the ‘We are so minded.’ must therefore disappear. . . . To show how the ‘We are so minded.’ does not disappear would be to describe a form of reflective consciousness that does not consist in looking down upon our representations. It seems impossible to describe such a consciousness, and yet it also seems to be the consciousness we have.” Lear goes on: “Perhaps it is impossible to describe, perhaps it can only make itself manifest: perhaps the *Philosophical*

*Investigations* is such a consciousness making itself manifest.” That it is impossible to describe, that it only makes itself manifest, need not indicate any lack in our powers of description (nor does Lear suggest it does; he says “only”, not “merely”); it may indicate the internality of the consciousness in question to any articulation of it. That is, it may reflect its character as not looking down. Cf. chap. 3.

## 6. The Explanation of Judgment

1. Necessity may attach only to an aspect of what we consider. Then it will be this aspect of it that comes from the cause in question; what remains accidental remains so because and insofar as it cannot be traced to this cause.
2. Frege writes: “Das Fürwahrhalten des Falschen und das Fürwahrhalten des Wahren kommen beide nach psychologischen Gesetzen zustande.” “Der Gedanke”, pp. 58–59. We explain why someone holds something true by reference to these psychological laws (“Eine Ableitung aus diesen und eine Erklärung eines seelischen Vorgangs, der in ein Fürwahrhalten ausläuft . . .”; *ibid.*). Thus Frege asserts that, in explaining why someone judges what she does, we disregard whether it is right or wrong so to judge. Nothing is more obvious than the falsity of this assertion. All of us reject it, reject it every day, in the manner in which we relate to each other. When I ask someone, *Why do you think A?*, and she responds, *Because B*, then I understand why she thinks *A* if and only if *B* is something that we know and that we understand establishes the validity of judging *A*. She, in explaining her judgment in this way, and I, in receiving her explanation, not only register the distinction of true from false judgment; rather, she explains, and I comprehend, her judgment *as valid*. For she explains why she judges *A* in a manner that, formally, reveals her judgment to be valid. An invalid judgment cannot be explained in this way. If *B* is wrong or bears no relation to *A*, then what she says does not tell me why she thinks *A*. I may be dumbfounded, when *B* is obviously wrong, or when there is no discernable nexus of *B* to *A*. In any case, I shall have further questions: *Why would she think B?*, or *How did she get the idea that B was related to A?* There may be answers to these questions; we may be able to explain error and confusion. (Up to a point.) But error and confusion are intelligible in a different way from knowledge and clarity. Knowledge and clarity are intelligible through themselves, error and confusion through a given character of the subject who is in error and confused. (Therefore error and confusion are intelligible only up to a point.) This distinction is made in judging; it is made in every judgment. Thus it is always already known by anyone. It is the prerogative of the philos-

opher to pretend to deny what anyone always already knows. Frege is a philosopher.

3. Adrian Moore writes: “It is a desideratum, when producing a representation that one takes to be true, to produce one whose best explanation does vindicate it” (*Points of View*, p. 36). In judging, I desire to judge in such a way that the explanation why I so judge establishes that it is correct so to judge. We see that this is so, Moore explains, when we consider the following: “Whenever a representation’s best explanation does not vindicate it, it casts doubt on it. . . . This is why I claim that it is a desideratum, when producing a representation that one takes to be true, to produce one whose best explanation vindicates it” (*Ibid.*). As I explain why I judge in a manner that fails to reveal it to be correct so to judge, my explanation casts doubt on, provides a reason for doubting, that it is correct so to judge. This is why, Moore says, it is a desideratum that my judgment have an explanation that vindicates it. However, it is not that, in judging, I desire that my judgment have such an explanation. I conceive my judgment as such as to satisfy this desire. For I cannot conjoin, in one act of the mind, my judgment and its explanation, unless this explanation reveals my judgment to be valid. And this is to say that, in judging, I rule out that my judgment has an explanation that does not conform to this description. Moore concludes that there is a “reflective ideal in which explanation and vindication come together”. Indeed, in judging, I conceive my judgment to conform to this ideal.
4. Martin Luther said, “Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders.” He spoke of a necessity of doing what he was doing (namely, rejecting the request to revoke his theses) that is nothing other than his consciousness of this very necessity: “Ich kann und will nichts widerrufen, weil es gefährlich und unmöglich ist, etwas gegen das Gewissen zu tun. Gott helfe mir. Amen.”
5. In his review of Nagel, *The Last Word*, Moore writes: “Our belief that twice four is eight is indeed necessary. It is necessary because, in ‘having this belief’, we are effectively laying down a rule of representation: nothing is to count as a disjoint pair of quartets unless it collectively counts as an octet. But this is not in any conflict with observation that there are all sorts of identifiable contingencies that make it possible for us to have this rule nor, therefore with the observation that we might not have had this rule. If we had not, twice four would not have failed to be eight. Rather, the question of what twice four is would not so much as have arisen for us. We would not have thought in those terms. Twice four would not have *failed* to be eight, because it *must* be eight. This must is as hard as it either can or need be. . . . We have a way of highlighting contingency in necessity, then, that helps us achieve a naturalistic understanding of our knowledge of the latter” (A. W. Moore, “One or Two Dogmas of Objectivism”, p. 388). It is impossible to speak of everything that is

happening in this passage. But one thing is pertinent here. It is a condition under which alone I can make a given judgment that I possess the concepts that figure in it. And thus one may try saying that, while I think my judgment necessary in judging (my judgment is a thought of things' having to be as they are judged to be in this very judgment), my possession of the concepts that figure in the judgment and provide the measure of its validity need not be necessary. Indeed, it may depend on things by tracing my concepts to which I can "achieve a naturalistic understanding" of my power to judge using these concepts and thus my power to recognize the necessity of judging as I do. This appears to be part of what Moore wants to say. Now, again, we need not deny that there is an ineliminable contingency in our possessing the concepts that we do possess. In particular, we need not deny that there is such a contingency in concepts that figure in judgments that have a contrary. What we can exclude is that our possession of a concept can be comprehended independently of the recognition of its capacity to be deployed in knowledge. Any concept, as such, excludes the possibility of its being explained by something that leaves open whether it is able to figure in knowledge. For, in using a concept in a judgment, I am conscious of using this concept. I am conscious of using it in an act of knowledge and thus am conscious of its capacity to figure in knowledge. As this consciousness is the same in any use of the concept, it can be identified with the concept: to possess the concept is to think it capable of figuring in knowledge. Therefore, possessing a concept, I exclude an explanation why I possess it that leaves open whether this concept is capable of being deployed in knowledge. This does not mean that there can be no explanation why I possess a concept that I can think while continuing to use that concept. It means that explaining why I possess the concept (insofar as so explaining it does not render it impossible to continue to use it) and recognizing that concept's capacity to figure in knowledge are but one act of the mind. (This transposes the discussion of E-explanation of judgment to concepts.) Any concept, then, excludes, excludes in each and every use of it, the idea that there may be a naturalistic understanding of our possession of it.

6. He may also question whether *B*. We will come to that in the next chapter.
7. Compare the illuminating reflections, presented as an interpretation of Kant and the unity of apperception, in Patricia Kitcher, *Kant's Thinker*.

As mere motion from one judgment to another does not constitute inference, there is no such thing as a computational account of inference. And what is lacking is not a feeling attending the motion, a feeling of being active, say, or a feeling of fittingness. While it certainly is a hard problem to account for phenomenal qualities such as the feel of a purple haze, inference poses a difficulty of a different order altogether. Compare Kitcher, *op. cit.*, chap. 15, section 4. Thomas Nagel, in *Mind and Cosmos*, chap. 4, observing that a

reductive of account of sensory consciousness appears impossible, explains that it is different kind of problem, more daunting still, to provide a scientific account of reason.

8. For the same reason, if the nexus of *B* to *A* were a third element, not thought in *B*, I would not, explaining *I think A because B*, give someone else everything she needs in order to judge *A*. She would need to be told that *B* provides sufficient grounds for judging *A*, of which, *ex hypothesi*, I say nothing.
9. Gottlob Frege, *Logik* (1879–1891), p. 3: “Urteilen, indem man sich anderer Wahrheiten als Rechtfertigungsgründen bewußt ist, heißt schließen.” Kant says the conclusion of an inference is the form of the inference, its premises, its matter. *Jäsche Logik*, A 121: “In den Vordersätzen oder Prämissen besteht die Materie, und in der Conclusion, *sofern sie die Konsequenz enthält*, die Form der Vernunftschlüsse.” (Emphasis added.)

## 7. The Power of Judgment

1. Wittgenstein notes that, quite generally, the problem of an apparent regress is not that it does not come to an end, but that it cannot begin. Cf. *Zettel*, § 693: “Das Raisonnement, das zu einem endlosen Regreß führt, ist nicht darum aufzugeben, weil ‘wir so nie das Ziel erreichen können’, sondern darum, weil es hier ein Ziel nicht gibt; so daß es gar keinen Sinn hat zu sagen ‘wir können es nicht erreichen’. Wir meinen leicht, wir müßten den Regreß ein paar Stufen weit durchlaufen und ihn dann sozusagen in Verzweiflung aufgeben. Während seine Ziellosigkeit (das Fehlen des Ziels im Kalkül) aus der Anfangsposition zu entnehmen ist.”
2. I am echoing Wittgenstein, “Thereby we show . . .” (*Philosophische Untersuchungen*, § 201: “Dadurch zeigen wir nämlich, daß es eine Auffassung einer Regel gibt, die nicht eine Deutung ist.” Anscombe’s translation misses the first person plural, and renders “Dadurch zeigen wir nämlich” as “what this shews is”. See my “The Idea of Practice”.)
3. Paul Franks, in *All or Nothing*, represents the fundamental problematic of German Idealism in this way. There are two orders of grounding: physical grounding, which is subject to a regress, and metaphysical grounding, which escapes the regress. And these two orders must be kept apart: there is no such thing as something that is metaphysically grounded and yet grounds something physical. The difficulty is to comprehend what is metaphysically grounded as sustaining the order of physical grounding without conflating the two orders of grounding. Cf. his “Heterogeneity Requirement”, *All or Nothing*, p. 102: “The root of the difficulty may be put as follows. One thinks of the absolutely unconditioned as the first member of the series of conditions it grounds. But



then, although one has sought to safeguard the distinctiveness of the absolutely unconditioned, say by assuming its temporal (or modal) transcendence, nevertheless the absolutely unconditioned inevitably becomes *homogeneous* with the other members of the series. And then, it becomes subject to the laws of the series—to the demand for an antecedent condition—and so it is no longer the absolutely unconditioned with which one hoped to satisfy reason's demand once and for all. Consequently, if this difficulty is to be overcome, it can only be by ensuring the *heterogeneity* of the absolutely unconditioned to every member of the series of conditions."

4. *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. A417–418, B445–446: "Dieses Unbedingte kann man sich nun gedenken, entweder als bloß in der ganzen Reihe bestehend, in der also alle Glieder ohne Ausnahme bedingt und nur das Ganze derselben schlechthin unbedingt wäre, und denn heißt der Regressus unendlich; oder das absolut Unbedingte ist nur ein Teil der Reihe, dem die übrigen Glieder derselben untergeordnet sind, der selbst aber unter keiner anderen Bedingung steht. In dem ersteren Falle ist die Reihe a parte priori ohne Grenzen (ohne Anfang), d. i. unendlich, und gleichwohl ganz gegeben, der Regressus in ihr aber ist niemals vollendet, und kann nur potentialiter unendlich genannt werden. Im zweiten Falle gibt es ein Erstes der Reihe, welches in Ansehung der verflossenen Zeit der Weltanfang, in Ansehung des Raumes die Weltgrenze, in Ansehung der Teile, eines in seinen Grenzen gegebenen Ganzen, das Einfache, in Ansehung der Ursachen die absolute Selbsttätigkeit (Freiheit), in Ansehung des Daseins veränderlicher Dinge die absolute Naturnotwendigkeit heißt."
5. The idea that the fundamental form of justification of a judgment is by reference to a power, or capacity, has become prominent in recent years. However, it is sometimes pursued within the framework of (the illusion of) an externalist account of knowledge. The corresponding concept of a power of knowledge then is one that signifies a given character of the subject. Such a concept can play no role in the justification of judgment. Andrea Kern develops the concept of a self-conscious power of knowledge in *Sources of Knowledge*. So does John McDowell in a manifold of works. (He sometimes does not state explicitly that the power to which he appeals is thought in the first person, but it is always implicit in his exposition.)
6. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. A294, B350: "daß der Irrtum nur durch den unbemerkten Einfluß der Sinnlichkeit auf den Verstand bewirkt werde."
7. Cf. Gareth Evans, *The Varieties of Reference*, and my *Categories of the Temporal* chaps. 4 to 6.
8. Cf. John Austin, "Other Minds".
9. This is denied by the larger part of the current epistemological literature. But we need not discuss this here. (A satisfactory discussion is in Andrea Kern,

*Sources of Knowledge*. See also my *Self-Consciousness*, chap. 5.) For the denial implies skepticism, or externalism (which is not different from skepticism), and thus reflects the incapacity, on the part of the larger part of the literature, to comprehend the consciousness of validity that constitutes judgment. This incapacity in turn reflects a lack of familiarity with the concept of a power, specifically the concept of a power of knowledge. We are beyond this, as we are discussing the consciousness of validity supplied by a judgment's consciousness of itself as resting in the power of knowledge.

10. In the next chapter, we shall re-encounter these two ways in which judgments of perception include the idea of their justification: as I think of what I judge as capable of explanation and exclude that there be sufficient grounds for judging the contrary.
11. The idea of a judgment justifying, or challenging, an end point would be like the idea of something that pushes, or holds still, the first mover.

It may seem that McDowell, in *Mind and World*, introduces experience in order to stop a regress that otherwise would haunt judgment. Thus it may seem that he holds to a form of foundationalism, replacing sensations by passive exercises of conceptual capacities. But this is wrong, for a starting point of judgment—if judgment needs a starting point—is not subject to challenge by judgment. Indeed McDowell explicitly states that his proposal would be a mere verbal variant of foundationalism—one of the terms of the oscillation he is out to leave behind—were it not for the fact that judgments of perception are open to challenge (*Mind and World*, lecture 1, section 5). The significance of this point of McDowell's may be misunderstood. One may think that an end point of justification is always provisional and that what, for the time being, serves as an end point may later, as grounds for doubting it emerge, be challenged. This is confused. Either a judgment, in what it judges, is conscious of its validity, and that is, of its necessity. Then there is no regress, and no end point is needed. Or a judgment does not provide for the consciousness of its necessity, but requires something other than what it judges through which to comprehend its necessity. Then there is a regress, and its end point—if there is one—is incapable of being justified by something other. If we try to conjoin both thoughts by, first, thinking of judgment as subject to a regress, and, secondly, thinking of the end point as capable of being put in doubt, that is, as sharing in the very form that gives rise to the regress, we fail to think anything.

## 8. The Self-Determination of the Power

1. This is Hegel's point, I think, in "On the Relation of Skepticism to Philosophy".
2. Cf. Chapter 3.

3. Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, 429a18–22.
4. He represents science as first act in 412a21–23, as second power in 417a21–28.
5. In both passages the example of a power preceding its acts is a power of sense perception. Sense perception also appears next to the *De Anima* passage above. There Aristotle explains that the power of perception, in the manner in which an individual has it by birth, or in virtue of its species, is power in the way in which a science is: both are such that the one who possesses the power thereby is able to do what the power is a power to do; both are powers in the primary way (cf. 417b16–19).
6. A most illuminating essay on the way in which this first power relates to its second powers is Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope*. As I shall refrain from entering the field of practical knowledge, I cannot discuss it here.
7. That a second power is no given nature, but determines itself in its own acts, has manifold implications. One is that the second power is of the individual in a sense in which no simple power is. And thus the subject of such powers is an individual in a sense in which a subject of undivided powers is not. Another is that teaching and learning introduce a relation of individual to individual, teacher and student, parent and child, which again, defines the subject of first power.
8. When, in *Metaphysics* Θ, Aristotle distinguishes powers that are *suggenes* from those that spring from their acts, he does not mention sciences. Yet when he discusses an objection to the possibility of a power that comes from its own acts, he relates it to sciences. This further corroborates the identification of the concept of a power that comes from its acts in *Metaphysics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* with the concept of a second power in *De Anima*.
9. Cf. my *Categories of the Temporal*, chap. 6. The same holds true in the field of practical knowledge, which, however, I have to leave aside.
10. Or, anyway, a very special sort of suffering. Comprehending this is comprehending what it is to teach someone, and to learn from someone. This lies beyond the scope of the present essay.
11. There is an aspect of Aristotle's discussion of the threefold structure of first power, second power, act, that I pass over: the dual character of the second power as insight and as practice. Aristotle discusses this as a formal character of virtues (1103a); it seems to define second powers in general. I pass over this, not because it is not important. On the contrary. I pass over this because I want to comprehend the identity in difference of insight and practice in its highest point: the identity in difference of absolute and empirical knowledge.
12. Compare the illuminating reflections on the concept of habit in Matthias Haase, "Geist und Gewohnheit", which develop the present thought in its significance for practical thought and the materiality of the subject of reason, bringing into relief a tradition running from Aristotle to St. Thomas to Hegel.

13. In “Epistemic Modals”, Seth Yalcin asserts that the value of this parameter is not initialized by the context. This is to say that it is not a given fact of the matter what the body of information is. In other words, science is not given. This makes his account, as he puts it, expressivist. But there is no reason for thinking that what is not given, as such, is an object of expression as opposed to judgment.
14. Gottlob Frege, *Logik (1879–1891)*, p. 3: “Urteilen, indem man sich anderer Wahrheiten als Rechtfertigungsgründen bewußt ist, heißt schließen.” Paul Boghossian, in “What is Inference?”, cites a translation of this passage, which runs as follows: “To make a judgment because we are cognisant of other truths as providing a justification for it is known as inferring.” He goes on to modify this into his own principle: “S’s inferring from p to q is for S to judge q because S takes the (presumed) truth of p to provide support for q.” It is not impossible that Boghossian’s reflections would have taken a different turn had he been able to work from a faithful translation, for example, this one: “Judging in such a way as to be conscious, in so judging, of other truths as justifying grounds is called inferring.” (It is not uncommon, in philosophy, that translations fail in the way in which this one does: they go wrong not because the passage is difficult to translate, but because the translator cannot bring himself to think what the passage says, and then changes it so as to turn it into something he believes he can think.)
15. This is developed as an interpretation of Kant by Ian Blecher, from whom I learned tremendously. Cf. his “Kant on Formal Modality”.

## 9. The Original Act of Judgment

1. See my *Categories of the Temporal*.
2. It may be said that a judgment that rests on a principle which, on its part, is not known apodictically, is relatively apodictic, namely relative to the principle. Were the principle itself known apodictically, the judgment grounded in it would be absolutely apodictic. These are fine words. But they do nothing to address the difficulty, and thus they obscure it. They obscure the fact that saying that a judgment is relatively apodictic is a way of saying that it is not apodictic.
3. Kant’s representation of the completion of judgment in the Transcendental Dialectic of the *Critique of Pure Reason* bears an articulation that it inherits from distinctions of forms of inference: categorical, hypothetical, disjunctive. For he describes the end of judgment as completion according to each of these forms. This articulation is external to the original intuition that is thus described. As original intuition repels the idea of inference, distinctions founded in distinctions of forms of inference are nothing to it.

4. This point is clearly expressed by Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 5.47: “Man könnte sagen: Die Eine logische Konstante ist das, was *alle* Sätze, ihrer Natur nach, mit einander gemein haben. Das aber ist die allgemeine Satzform.” (“One could say: the one logical constant is that which *all* propositions, according to their nature, have in common with one another. That however is the general form of proposition.”) It also appears to be the insight Saul Kripke works to expound in the lectures reported by Alan Berger, “Kripke on the Incoherence of Adopting a Logic”.
5. Aristotle, in *Metaphysics* Γ, brings this out when he displays how someone pretending to reject the law of non-contradiction says nothing at all. We sought to emulate this manner of Aristotle’s (which also conforms to Wittgenstein’s description of the philosopher as transforming unobvious into obvious non-sense) in our discussion of attempts to deny the self-consciousness of judgment in Chapter 3.
6. See my *Categories of the Temporal*, chaps. 4 to 6.
7. Compare the opposing explanation of the same fact by Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. A 152–153, B 191–192.
8. Lewis Carroll, “What the Tortoise said to Achilles”, p. 279.
9. Paul Boghossian, in “What is inference?”, explains the idea that the premises provide sufficient grounds for judging the conclusion in this way. Inferring something is following a rule: as I infer  $p$  from  $q$ , I follow a rule that requires that one judge  $p$  provided that  $q$ . This makes sense only if (and because) someone who follows a rule in judging  $p$  understands that to judge  $p$  is to conform to that rule. Were this not so, there would be no reason to think that someone who follows a rule prescribing that one judge  $p$  provided that  $q$  has any notion of  $q$  as speaking in favor of judging  $p$ . But now we have exchanged words for words. We speak of the consciousness that, given  $q$ , judging  $p$  accords with a rule, where before we spoke of the consciousness that, given  $p$ , there are sufficient grounds for judging  $q$ .

Boghossian suggests that, still, we have made progress as we recognize judging one thing on the basis of another to be an instance of following a rule. For thus we have traced inference to something more fundamental. And not only is following a rule more fundamental than inferring something from something; it is absolutely fundamental. Therefore our search for comprehension has come to a close. So Boghossian argues.

We may well accept that following a rule is fundamental to human existence. (It is not more fundamental than judging one thing on the basis of another. Let me simply assert that any act of following a rule is a judgment, which understands itself to be grounded in the rule.) However, our inquiry has not come to an end when we encounter something fundamental. On the contrary, this is where our inquiry begins. His rhetoric suggests that Boghos-

sian believes that comprehending something is reducing it to something more fundamental (“giving a non-circular analysis”), which entails that there is no such thing as comprehending something that is absolutely fundamental. It is a consequence of this idea that there is no such thing as philosophy, provided, first, that philosophy is an expression of the desire to understand, and, second, that the sole object of interest to philosophy is what is fundamental—so much so that the discovery that something is not fundamental, but depends on or reduces to something other than it, immediately turns the attention of the philosopher away from it to what he now recognizes to be more fundamental. It is a further consequence that there is no such thing as comprehending anything. For I do not comprehend something as I trace it to something that mystifies me. On the contrary, this settles me more firmly in my incomprehension.

10. Crispin Wright draws this conclusion (“Comment on Paul Boghossian: What is inference”). He draws it on the basis of the observation that he can conceive no other way of comprehending the possibility of inference. But this is not a valid form of argument (op. cit., p. 32).

On the mentioned basis Wright asserts that there must be a fundamental level of intellectual activity on which a subject moves from thinking one thing to thinking certain others, which movement manifests and is explained by appropriate dispositions. Thought, on this level, is not objective: an explanation why someone thinks what she does refers to a given character of the subject, namely, the relevant dispositions of thought. An explanation of a given thought of the subject in terms of such a disposition leaves open whether things are as, in this thought, they are thought to be. It is a further act, additional to its explanation by the disposition, to think of the thought so explained as conforming to what is. This is clearly expressed by Wright when he says that he *hopes* (he says, “we hope”, *ibid.*) that his dispositions are such as to give rise to thoughts that conform to what is. As Wright hopes this, he may ask himself what it would be for him to realize that his hope has come true. Realizing this, Wright would have to bring to bear a measure of the relevant dispositions, a measure such that conformity of a disposition to it ensures that thoughts arising from this disposition agree with what is. But now we must inquire into the character of his thought of this measure. It may be that its explanation, ultimately, is provided by a given character of the subject, in the given case, Wright. Then it is an open question, not answered in this thought itself, nor in its explanation, whether or not it conforms to how things are. Wright may hope, and we may hope for Wright, that it does. But then, as Wright hopes this, he may ask himself what it would be for him to find his hope has come true. Or, Wright’s thought of the relevant measure is objective: it is explained by something that establishes its validity. Then it can be comprehended without appeal to any given character of Wright, but by that of which

he so thinks. However, Wright's account of inference, which reduced him to hoping that his dispositions be aligned with reality, is a denial that there is objective thought.

Wright recommends his idea by noting that it extends to all manner of acting for a reason. He does not seem to realize that practical philosophy is stunted by this difficulty: the difficulty of comprehending how acting for a reason may include an understanding of the reason on which one acts as speaking in favor of so acting. Indeed, the field of ethics, in the opposition of reasons realism and constructivism, is structured by this difficulty. However, in this field, the response to the difficulty Wright proposes—we act as we are set up to act, *hoping* that our dispositions are such that we act well in manifesting them—is obviously absurd. (I am not aware of anyone endorsing it.) An illuminating discussion of the difficulty, as it emerges in this field, is Douglas Lavin, “Problems of Intellectualism: Raz on Reason and its Objects”.

11. We saw this when we discussed justification in Chapter 6. There we said, if it is to be possible to explain my judgment *A* by *B* (I think *A* because *B*) in a way that reflects its objectivity, that is, without referring to any given character of the one who so judges, then it is in judging *B* that I recognize *B* to provide sufficient grounds for judging *A*. Otherwise I would not, in judging *B*, recognize the validity of judging *A*. And then I would not, explaining why I think *A* by *B*, give everything needed to apprehend the validity of thinking *A*: someone to whom, in an exchange of reasons, I give *B* as my ground for thinking *A* would not therein be given what she needs in order to recognize the validity of judging *A*. Being given only *B*, she would do right to suspend judgment on *A*. As does the tortoise.
12. Quine is famous for assimilating logical principles to empirical, scientific principles. Like all general statements, he explains, logical principles are corroborated by experience, and are liable to be brought down by experience. (W. V. O. Quine, “Two Dogmas of Empiricism”, p. 42.) Now suppose Quine were to meet the tortoise, who sees no reason to give up on any one of its judgments *p* and  $p \supset q$ , even as it recognizes—by experience, we may suppose— $\neg q$ . Quine could do nothing to show the tortoise that it needs to adjust any of its judgments in response to this experience. Quite generally, he could do nothing to get it to see that a given experience is recalcitrant and requires it to change its theory in any way. Quine's assertion that *recalcitrant* experience may *require* us to change logical principles undermines itself. (Saul Kripke presents this objection to Quine in the form of the parable of Achilles and the tortoise (“Kripke on the Incoherence of Adopting a Logic”, pp. 182–85).

Logical principles are not principles of any science. As the concept of sufficient grounds (the principle of inference) is a consciousness of the structure of power, power / act, act, it cannot be rendered as an element of this structure; it cannot be conceived as a first act of a power of knowledge. In gen-

eral, the attempt to represent a whole as an element of this whole gives rise to a regress, which threatens to prove the impossibility of the whole. The regress of Achilles and the tortoise is that regress for judgment. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1041b20–22.

13. This is not the place to develop this, but it is worthwhile to note that this is an implication of realism with respect to reasons in ethics. This “realism” conceives the apprehension of how one ought to act, or live, as the recognition of a fact that is not the same as the (practical) knowledge of it. It follows that the apprehension does not provide for comprehension why one ought to live in this way. And as the apprehension is ultimate, there is an ultimate incomprehensibility of the principle that is to govern our self-determined life. Realism about reasons is the assertion that it is the essence of human life to be incomprehensible to itself.
14. *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik*, Introduction XV.
15. Or three. This need not concern us.
16. Cf. the superb discussion—to which the present essay is deeply indebted—of the law of non-contradiction in Irad Kimhi, *Thinking and Being*.

## 10. The Identity of Absolute and Empirical Knowledge

1. With this we arrive at the idea John McDowell propounds in “Hegel’s Idealism”: “The standpoint of Absolute Knowledge is a standpoint at which we appreciate how the pursuit of objectivity is the free unfolding of the Notion. It is not a standpoint at which we have somehow removed ourselves from the empirical world. If the case of the pursuit of objectivity that is in question is empirical inquiry, we are already engaged with the empirical world in enjoying Absolute Knowledge” (“Hegel’s Idealism as Radicalization of Kant”, pp. 87–88). It may be said that McDowell, in this text, fails to bring out the speculative identity of, and that is, the difference between, absolute and empirical knowledge. However, there is no absolute measure of what must be said to bring to explicit consciousness what anyone always already knows. This depends on the obstacles that one encounters and thinks worthwhile to remove. It is important to remember this in order not to allow any local confusion to inform the standard of what it is to make something clear.
2. Cf. Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*, p. 83: “The process is highly fallible, but it could not even be attempted without the hard core of self-evidence, on which all less certain reasoning depends.” A reader of Nagel’s *The Last Word* may ask for a demarcation of thought that is valid in itself. This is easily supplied: thought that is valid in itself is without contrary; it is such that there is no such thing as rejecting it. This holds true of, and only of, what is thought *in every thought*. It holds true of the self-consciousness of thought.





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